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“SO FIGHT I”

THOUGHTS UPON THE WARFARE IN WHICH
EVERY SOUL IS ENGAGED, AND IN WHICH
THERE CAN BE NO NEUTRALS

By

REV. G. C. BEACH, M.A.

Author of “The Better Hope”

Foreword by the Rev.

J. STUART HOLDEN, D.D.

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PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1917

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Affectionately Dedicated
TO
MY FATHER AND MOTHER.

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PREFACE

THE chapters of this book are an expansion of the idea so well enunciated in a recent sermon by the Rev. Canon F. B. Macnutt, that what our Churches need to-day is something which represents

“THE MORAL EQUIVALENT OF WAR.”

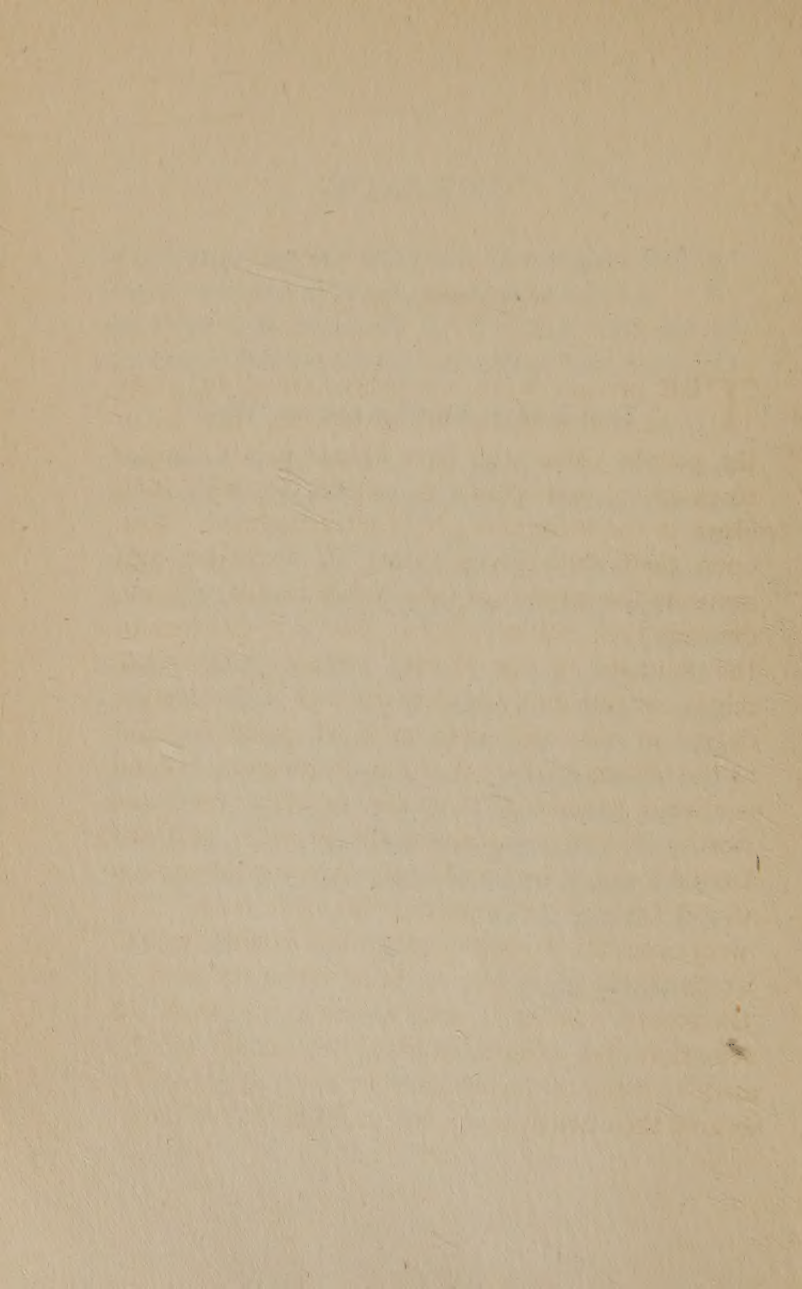
From the standpoint of parable there have been few wars so full of teaching as the present European War.

Each chapter of this book is an attempt to bring out some spiritual message based upon incidents in the war.

My thanks are due to the Editors of the *Church Army Gazette* and *Home Words* for kindly allowing some of these articles to be reprinted in this book from their columns. Dr. Holden's Foreword brings to mind many happy days at Cambridge, spent in Christian fellowship and witnessing for the Master—a fellowship which has been of no small spiritual profit to the writer.

G. C. B.

January, 1917.



FOREWORD

THE present is an age characterized by great ingenuity in the art of catching the ear of the people. Men who have things to sell, causes to promote, propaganda to extend, vie with each other in the legitimate art of advertisement. And upon their skill, in capturing the attention and arousing the interest of those to whom they appeal, depends their entire success. Nor is it different in the ministry of the Gospel. Where indifference reigns, as unhappily it does to such a disquieting degree in our land, nothing is so greatly needed as the setting forth of Truth in an arresting fashion—always premising that the methods used are worthy the high calling of the preacher and the Divine Evangel he proclaims. It is for this reason that I am glad to commend this little book. The writer uses the passing incidents and familiar watch-words of the great war to bring home the facts of the greater conflict in such a way as to secure the attention and interest of many who could not be made to listen to the ordinary sermon. And having secured their attention he does not fail to give them

the essential verities of Christ's Gospel. This is true ministry; and I trust the influence of its printed record in these pages may be fruitful in its avowed objective of bringing men to the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

J. STUART HOLDEN.

" And so I live, you see,
Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
Prefer, still struggling to effect
My warfare ; happy that I can
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
Nor left in God's contempt apart,
With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.

Thank God, no Paradise stands barred
To entry, and I find it hard
To be a Christian, as I said."

BROWNING.

" Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of
Jesus Christ."

ST. PAUL.

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“SO FIGHT I”

CHAPTER I

“SO FIGHT I”

FROM out of all the entanglements and intricacies which have involved us, as a nation, in the present war, we simple folk, ignorant of the workings of diplomacy, caring, perhaps, but little about what is termed “the balance of power” in Europe, have had to decide, each for self, what is our plain and obvious duty.

At the outset the nation had to make its decision—then we had to make our own individual resolve. Thank God, the two resolves were identical. It turned out to be, after all, not a question as to whether we ought to join in with the fighting and quarrels of continental nations, or not; whether we ought to maintain a dignified aloofness, or not; the plain matter at issue was ultimately and elementally this: were we going to allow a great bullying Power to rob and murder an inoffensive small nation without protest, or were we going to step in and say—

THIS SHALL NOT BE SO, IF WE CAN
PREVENT IT!

We believe that we made, on that fateful day in August, 1914, the only decision that a right-loving and right-thinking people could make; we therefore entered the war.

Then came the call to the individual to join in and help, and it is to the everlasting honour of our country that practically her whole manhood came forward to take part, and that her womanhood, in such spheres as were possible for women, was equally willing to do its share.

The war has always provided its parable for the world. Is the world to allow a great blustering tyrant, such as Satan, to rule it, to direct its destinies, to quench its lawful spiritual ambitions, to bully and override the feeblehearts and littlefaiths, without protest or opposition?

Never, thank God, has the world been without a body of men whose lives have been actuated by a thorough hatred of wrong and a firm resolve to resist the devil and all his works.

Once, in the days of the Flood, one man and his family represented the whole of this antagonistic party; later on God chose a nation to stand as His chosen people, to set the rest of the world a pure and virtuous example; later still He sent His Son to teach a sure way of victory and to draw together a few disciples who would count their lives as of little value in comparison with the truth which they sought to instil into the world—and, from among the band of later disciples and apostles of

this teaching, there arose one who laid great stress upon the individual responsibility of every man to “fight the good fight of faith,” “to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” and to “work out the problem of personal salvation with fear and trembling,” lest, after all, evil should prove to be too strong, and “labour should be all in vain.”

Perhaps our best recruiting agents have been the men who came back from the Front, with some honour fresh upon them, and who inspired, by their account of the warfare, the men who could not possibly realize its dread horror and its serious call to every man.

Modest in their account of their own deeds, their very presence proclaimed the earnestness of their service.

They seemed to say to the crowds, “I have fought the good fight; I have been and striven; I know that others can do the same, that it is their duty no less than mine; and therefore I beg you all, who are able to do so, to be “followers of me!”

In such actual words does that great Christian fighter address the world of believers, who have found that the devil is very busy and very strong and needs the strenuous opposition and resistance of

EVERY AVAILABLE MAN, WOMAN, AND
CHILD!

“So fight I,” he says, “not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body and bring it

into subjection: lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” St. Paul was ever in the very thick of the fighting; he was not one who shrank from swarming over the trench parapet and attacking the enemy at close quarters; the more closely he could engage him in deadly conflict, the more he rejoiced; and thus his advice, based upon this description of his own fighting, is of great importance.

So FIGHT I! The battle spirit was ever in his Christianity. There was nothing namby-pamby about it; to him the service of Christ meant a real conflict against a real foe! No beating of the air—i.e., aiming at an opponent a blow that misses the mark—but every blow a telling stroke which deprived the enemy of some cherished advantage and made him anxious about the result.

St. Paul's illustration is, of course, taken from a boxing match; but, had he lived in the present bitter days, he would have found no picture more descriptive of a Christian man's personal conflict with evil than the trench warfare which has been the outstanding characteristic of the fighting; in which victory can only be obtained by the patient piling up of one small advantage upon another until the enemy fails from the repeated blows which have gradually “nibbled” away his strength, as General Joffre would say.

St. Paul's life and work were essentially trench warfare.

“ Rooted and grounded in Christ ” himself, he fought against a foe entrenched in positions which seemed impregnable, and his victories were won by watchfulness, prayerfulness, and the constant seizing of opportunities of exploding a mine or carrying a redoubt in the enemy’s lines. Almost any chapter in any of his epistles will show this unmistakably. These short articles, though not in any sense dealing with St. Paul’s life, are an attempt to deal with the fact, so often emphasized by St. Paul, that

CHRISTIANITY IS WARFARE AND THE
CHRISTIAN IS OF NECESSITY A FIGHTER ;

and each one will deal with some aspect of or some incident in the European War which seems to bear a spiritual interpretation.

In whatever way we regard warfare, we cannot forget that every baptized child is named a soldier of the Cross at his dedication to God, and is signed with the sign of the cross in order that “ he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His Banner against sin, the world and the devil and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.”

The famous Latin poet, Horace, has some fine lines about a runner—

“ Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam
Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit,
Abstinit venere et vino.”

Translated, they seem to say—

"He who would strive the prize to gain
Must labour long, with might and main,
Must sweat, and bear unwonted strain,
From lustful revels must abstain."

This is good advice, and St. Paul's record of his own experiences in the Christian life suggests much the same thing when he writes—

"So fight I! I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest after preaching about these things to others, I should find myself rejected and without a prize."

The Prince of Evil does not seem to trouble much about the man who takes his religion as a matter of course, who regards it lightly, and as hardly worth fighting for. Such a man is easy prey. He has no consciousness that good and evil are always at death-grips round about him. He cries "Peace" when there is no peace! He regards the Christian warrior as a misguided fanatic, making a lot of "fuss" when there is no need of it.

The Devil has no need to bring up first-line troops to defeat such a man. But there is, thank God, another type of man, of whom the poet Browning sings thus—

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break, never dreamed
Tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise—are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake"—

against such a man the Devil brings up horse and foot, artillery, machine-guns, and everything that he has, to work his destruction by every means at his disposal.

During the recent famous retreat from Mons, a battery of gunners waited to receive their orders near a wood close to Compiègne. Suddenly the mists rolled away and they were observed by the Germans, who opened fire upon them before they had time to get the guns into action, and destroyed almost the whole battery. One gun, however, was worked by four men, who stuck gallantly to their post until they silenced all the German artillery which was turned upon them.

For their skill and valour they received the Victoria Cross, and never was it better deserved.

Not all who have performed brave deeds during the war have received the Cross, or have been singled out for special reward ; but, in the spiritual conflict, not one man will lose his reward or be forgotten.

“Now they do it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible,” and though some people aver that in the Christian warfare we ought to do our duty and never think of the reward, yet St. Paul often thought of it, and it is a pleasant thing to remember, occasionally, that, though our service may be rendered in some position far removed from the public gaze, and its nature may be such

that few would give it any praise or think it meritorious, yet

OUR CAPTAIN NEVER FORGETS AND OUR
REWARD IS SURE!

It seems to me that sometimes we stand in the position of those valiant gunners. Alas! do we always acquit ourselves so nobly?

We hold some position of responsibility and importance; have been placed in it by our Captain, and are supposed to be looking to Him for instructions.

Yet, somehow, an earthborn mist has arisen to hide Him from our eyes, and it is thick enough to hide the enemy also.

Then suddenly the mists roll away, and, to our consternation, we behold the foe close at hand, prepared for action.

It is evident that, unless we regard our Cause as not worth fighting for, we must get to work at once; there is no need to ask what to do; the danger is manifest. We must strike, and strike hard. We see that we must destroy him, or he will destroy us.

The drunkard has been indulging his appetite, and falling daily lower and lower. He consorts with men who drink with him. They will not tell him of his danger. Mists veil his eyes, and he knoweth not that the end of his miserable habit is death.

Suddenly, by the mercy of God, something happens to him. An accident, a bereavement, a criminal act which sends him to prison to reflect on his downward course, or perhaps the faithful word of a friend which pierces through the joints of his harness and proclaims him sinner and fool. Then, for the first time, he sees his danger. What is he to do? The enemy is upon him! He sees that if he does not abandon the fatal habit, it will destroy him body and soul.

WELL FOR THAT MAN IF HE KNOWS OF
ONE WHO CAN HELP HIM!

Well for him if, in his agony and helplessness, he is able to cry out—

“LORD, SAVE ME!”

for never is that cry unheard, and never is that help sought in vain. Herein the Christian Religion surmounts all other forms of faith for the godly. The Christian can always summon his Captain to his side. He is always with his troops; never even out of call.

His power is always greater than the enemy's assault, and when summoned to help, He always brings the victory.

Though St. Paul in this particular paragraph (1 Cor. ix., 24-27) does not mention the supernatural Helper Who alone is able to sustain the efforts of His warriors, yet elsewhere he makes it perfectly

clear that without Christ there is no possibility of a continued successful resistance to sin.

The Presence of Christ has the same bearing upon the fight as the increasing supply of "shells and yet more shells" has upon the European War. At the Christian's side, when he fights a battle for Our Lord there stands One Who is stronger than the strong, Who, amid the direst conflict, can quicken the fainting spirit and nerve the palsied arm to fresh effort, Whose voice rings out, amid the din and roar of battle, with the comforting words—

"Fear not, I am with thee! I am thy Shield and thy Salvation; I will deliver thee and bring thee to honour!"

With such a promise of help as this, well may the Christian soldier, though hard pressed by the foe, say with the great warrior of old,

"SO FIGHT I!"

CHAPTER II

WHAT EVERY SOLDIER OUGHT TO KNOW

I N one of the bookshops of Paternoster Row I picked up, recently, an excellent little book called *What every Soldier Ought to Know*.

The booklet commences thus :—" The object to be aimed at in the training of the soldier is to make him, in mind and body, a better man than his adversary on the field of battle. *Fitness for War* is the only thing that counts, and every soldier should school himself to bear this constantly in mind.

HIS FIRST DUTY IS TO ACQUIRE A SOLDIERLY SPIRIT.

We are reminded of an extract from the great Official Handbook of the Christian Army: " If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The world more and more admires the Person of Christ and His wonderful Spirit—His power of enduring hardship, His disregard of self, His wonderful courage, His unexampled judgment shown in such a matter as the question about the tribute-money. Yet how little it has acquired the Christ-spirit; how self-seeking, luxurious, and intemperate it still remains after many centuries of Christianity.

In that marvellous battle of Ypres, when things looked desperate for the British, Sir John French ran along from trench to trench inspiring the soldiers to fresh courage and endurance.

HE PUT HIS SPIRIT INTO THEM.

They say that the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia is only too ready to take a place in the firing-line, and every one knows how the Belgians have been animated by the constant presence of their splendid King Albert, who has struggled shoulder-to-shoulder with them to keep the enemy at bay.

If we could realize more how

OUR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STANDS AT OUR SIDE IN THE FIERCEST FIGHT,

how even now He prays for us, and intercedes with His Father that our strength fail us not, what an inspiration that would be! Do we *really* believe Him when He says "I am with you all the days"?

In one of the "cottages" of Dr. Barnardo's Homes at Ilford, some of the girls were discussing God's power to help them when they were tempted. One girl rather doubted it, and asked another whether God ever helped her.

"I SHOULD JUST THINK HE DOES,"
was the joyful answer.

This is the testimony of those who know their General best. He does help. His sympathy and understanding enables Him to bestow His help just when it is most needed. When the conflict rages,

He rallies His followers by rushing into the very thick of it to encourage them. Could we but see Him, how much keener would be our spirit, how much more earnest our warfare.

The next instruction concerns discipline. "Discipline," says the book, "is the living force which turns a crowd of men into an army. The essence of discipline is instant and cheerful obedience, not only to commands given by word of mouth, but to all rules and regulations duly issued by proper authority. Soldiers will be held personally responsible that they make themselves acquainted with such orders and details of duty as are posted in quarters."

This brings us on to familiar ground.

What is true Christianity? What does it mean to be a Christian? How can I live a Christian life?

HOW CAN I FIGHT THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE?

The answer is—give prompt and cheerful obedience to

1. The Voice of God speaking to the conscience;
2. The Word of God.

There are too many arguments, too many differences of opinion, too many private theories about the Christian life—and far too little obedience to God's Voice and God's Word.

Christ said: "If any man wills to do My will, *he shall know* of the doctrine."

It is time enough to inquire about the Why and

Wherefore of our Captain's orders when we have obeyed them. Think well of these words of the poet, A. H. Clough—

"When the armies are set in array, and the battle beginning,

Is it well that the soldier whose place is far to the leftward,
Say: 'I will go to the right, it is there I shall do best service'?

There is a great Field-Marshal, my friends, Who rules our battalions,

Let us in Providence trust, and abide and work in our stations."

Remember that each man is personally responsible that he make himself acquainted with orders and details of duty.

If you want really to know how to fight the good fight, then accustom yourself to study the Great Order Book. Don't be content to receive your knowledge of God's truths from listening to sermons, or reading the pages of some religious "weekly"—however helpful you may find these things.

Shoulder your personal responsibility and get a personal acquaintance with the will of God.

The men of Kitchener's new Army have made startling progress with their training. What is the secret? Why are they becoming proficient so much more rapidly than is usually the case? Are they "better stuff" than went to make previous armies?

I think the reason is that

EVERY MAN REGARDS HIMSELF AS A FACTOR
IN FREEING HIS COUNTRY FROM A
TERRIBLE DANGER.

Every man is bent upon making himself supremely fit, and the call which roused the country to action has

TOUCHED EACH HEART INDIVIDUALLY,
and disciplined it to a noble purpose.

Says a writer, "Men who in July were sitting on office stools are now crawling in the dark across the slush towards the German trenches, pausing to listen for any cracking of the heavy silence, and then, reassured, crawling on again, peeping over the parapet into the German trenches, shooting and thrusting, living a whirling hour of extraordinary life, and then trying to believe that it is quite real, and not a fantastic dream."

All this because of a CALL—a sudden inward realizing of a personal responsibility, and the brave resolve to shoulder it at all costs.

Should the would-be Christian soldier shrink from obedience to the Call? Is it less serious to fight for God against the Destroyer of immortal souls? Perhaps the warfare threatens to be hard, and the discipline unpleasant. Has this kept back our brave fellows from enlistment in their Country's Army?

The thought of "the insistent bugle-call in the dark before the dawn; the sharp words of command that do not invite discussion; the learning to lie soft; the cold, the wet, the fatigue, the stew"—all these things are the discipline that makes men fight well. The soldier expects them—enters upon them willingly!

Will you submit your soul, in the great fight against Satan, to the supreme control of your Captain ; cheerfully undergoing its necessary discipline, because you have

REALIZED THE DANGER AND HEARD
THE CALL

and determined to see the matter through ?

The last instructions in the book are as regards training in the use of weapons and spade.

“ Learning to shoot straight is very largely a question of taking enough trouble ? To become an efficient marksman depends on the gradual education of the eyesight and the development of the will-power. ‘ Fire Discipline ’ means strict attention to the signals and orders of the commander.”

THE TRAINING OF THE SPIRITUAL EYE-
SIGHT

takes much time and trouble.

Many men think that when they have become converted, i.e., when they have enlisted in the Army of Christ, that is all that is needed : that Christian graces and virtues will spring upon them automatically, and they will find all their old vices and bad habits disappear like magic !

It is not so. Downright hard training of the spiritual vision is needed. Learning from God’s Word ; the daily habit of penitence and self-examination ; the effort to get a clearer view of the spiritual foe—all these things help in the warfare ; and, more than all,

STEADY UNWAVERING RELIANCE UPON THE
COMMANDER'S SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE,

will serve to keep us from wasting powder and shot, and will enable us to find the range, so as to aim straight and not to miss the mark.

A story is told of a company who were much harassed by an irritating "sniping," which kept picking off the men, even in the security of the trenches.

A corporal was told off to watch for the sniper, and in a short time reported three flashes from a tree about one hundred yards off. The company waited to prove this, and presently there came more flashes. The order was given—"five rounds, rapid," into the tree—and when the smoke had cleared away, there were no more flashes! The enemy had been discovered and destroyed.

Have you

TRAINED YOUR SPIRITUAL VISION TO
DETECT A FOE?

You may discover danger in some innocent thing, when God has educated your spiritual sight; but never mind what it is, good or bad, if it's hurting your soul

DESTROY IT. TRAIN YOUR BATTERIES
UPON IT.

Kill that habit, that liking, that influence, before it becomes a spiritual danger.

Christ will find the range for you!

CHAPTER III

MOBILIZING MEN AND MONEY

A WRITER on the war says :—
“ My view of the war has always been that every single one of us is grossly betraying his duty to his country if he is not contributing the very maximum of his ability to the conduct of the war ; and that also involves another contention, that each and every one of us *can* contribute to the war.”

Our now-awakened country says “ Amen ” to that, and all that is being done in the way of organizing and mobilizing men and labour for National Service is a proof that

EVERY ONE IS WILLING AND ANXIOUS TO
HELP.

At first, outside the purely military mobilization, everything was done by voluntary enterprise. Lord Roberts mobilized field-glasses ; the daughters of Grand Duke Michael mobilized gloves and mittens ; Lady Jellicoe’s Sailors’ Fund gathered in thousands of socks, mufflers, belts, jerseys, blankets, pipes and tobacco galore, books, and gramophones ; Lady

Monson has collected, on behalf of the National Egg Collection, thousands of eggs for the wounded soldiers in the hospitals ; H.R.H. the Princess Mary, at Christmastime, by a special appeal, secured £163,000, and nearly a million presents of tobacco-boxes, cigarettes, pipes, and tinder-lighters for the men in the trenches.

In short, everything from handsome motor-ambulances down to humble sticks of chocolate have been "lined up" to play their rightful part in this great war, and every one has had some chance to help. Now come the War Loan and the National Register. The War Loan gives every person in the Kingdom, rich or poor, an opportunity of lending the country his savings, to aid her in her struggle for freedom.

The National Register inquires of each person—

WHAT CAN YOU DO? WHAT ARE YOU
WILLING TO DO?

It is in the hour of danger that countries mobilize their forces. When the foe is getting busy, and threatens to invade, then we summon our legions for the work of resistance and defiance, and we place (as our Prime Minister recently said) at our country's disposal

"EVERY OUNCE OF WEIGHT, EVERY SHILLING OF MONEY, EVERY DROP OF BLOOD."

This war has been called the Great War. From the material point of view this is the correct title. From another point of view it is not. There is a

greater war than this—a war waged by a more ruthless enemy, in which he

DEFIES THE ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD daily and hourly ; yes ! and even gains advantages here and there, because the souls of men, alas ! have not seen the danger, and have delayed to mobilize against the foe until the delay has become disastrous.

In this greater warfare, the Spiritual warfare, the ranks of God’s army are often divided. They lack the ammunition of prayer ; those soldiers of God who are actually at the Front facing the danger have often to go short of the support and encouragement which they ought to have because

CHURCH WORKERS ARE ENGAGING IN STRIKES.

If the Church of Christ would but mobilize its forces against any manifest evil (the evil of strong drink for instance), it could deal heavy, decisive blows, and, with Christ at the head, win the victory.

The difficulty of such mobilizing is a great one, of course.

Look at the months of work involved in mobilizing Russia’s men and means. Great difficulties of distance have to be overcome. Men have to be brought on foot, over mountains, through deserts and steppes, across torrents and through forests, but they arrive at last.

In the Spiritual warfare there are enormous diffi-

culties to be overcome before the forces of God can be summoned to the fray : mountains of prejudice, forests of opinions, deserts of unbelief, torrents of dislike to be passed. If the Church were brought face to face with her foe, and could see the mighty danger of indifference and delay,

SHE WOULD NOT WAIT LONG

before bringing up all her resources, both of men and money, to use them against the evil. Her members would say, like the Indian Rajah, when asked what he was ready to give to the war—

“ ALL I POSSESS ”—

and they would never again refuse a plain duty because it was unpleasant and disagreeable. A missionary in Africa was once asked if he “ liked his work.” “ No,” he replied, “ my wife and I do not *like* dirt. We do not *like* the vile huts into which we have to crawl through animal refuse. We do not *like* the enforced association with ignorant, filthy, unpleasant people. But liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We had orders to ‘ go ’—and we went.”

LIKING HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

The vicar who resigned his “ living ” the other day to go to the Front as a transport driver, the clerk who left his stool to become a private in Kitchener’s Army, the lady who gave up her comforts and refinements to live in daily contact with

pain and suffering in the hospitals—all went, not because they expected to like it, but because they liked—nay, loved to help.

In this Spiritual War, which is raging fiercely every hour (have you never felt it in your own soul?), there is constant and urgent need of your services. The Church cannot resort to “compulsion.” If the call of God, the appeal of a Christian friend, the sight of the Church Army (the big one, whose Headquarters are Heaven) fighting against its foes, the sufferings of saints both past and present, the knowledge that

THE ENEMY IS IN POSSESSION OF MUCH OF GOD’S TERRITORY

do not “mobilize” you, it is difficult to see what will.

There’s a call to you to mobilize with your brethren on Sunday morning at Church.

You’re a long way off—haven’t been for years—have no good clothes—can’t find your way through the Prayer Book;

STEP OUT, MAN, AND LINE UP WHERE YOU ARE REALLY WANTED.

“Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.”

You’re needed there. Wade through those rivers of indifference, climb over those mountains of prejudice, put that Sunday newspaper in the rack (or

the fire !), and let God's people see that, even if you're not a saint, you would like to have a hand in "downing the devil." Of course it's unpleasant—much of this mobilizing—but there are plenty of unpleasant things which are very necessary.

The giving of money and the shedding of blood are unpleasant ; but the success of our arms depend upon it.

When Queen Victoria wept over the wounds of Crimean soldiers, they said to her—

"Don't weep, your Majesty, we'd do it all over again for Queen and Country."

If you could but realize that all the forces of evil are mobilized to overthrow the Kingdom of Christ, and that He looks to you to

"DO YOUR BIT,"

you would not hold aloof.

There's a call to you to mobilize all your powers, your opportunities, your possessions, for the fight.

It is a call to PERSONAL CONSECRATION.

Have you given this matter a right and proper consideration ?

Perhaps you reply—"I'm fighting the devil as well as I know how to."

This may be perfectly true ; but imagine all the men in Great Britain fighting in their own way, each going for the Kaiser and his men as well as he knows how to !

What a muddle there would be ! No one would

realize what others were doing, and the war would soon be over—NOT in our favour.

In some places in the kingdom you may see a tiny, little chapel, not now used for service. Its history is simply this:—In a larger communion there was a man who wanted his own way, and objected to fall in line with the rest. So he set out and built a little tabernacle where he and a few followers might “worship” according to their own convenience; there was no real need for it, and before very long the chapel closed its doors.

It would no doubt be possible for all the buildings for Public Worship to be closed up, and every man to worship in his own way at his own house. But facts are stubborn things, and men who don’t attend God’s House on Sunday as a rule don’t worship God at home.

Let us be perfectly honest. Is not the National Register a token that if the war is to be won,

WE MUST MOBILIZE, AND EACH MAN MUST
BE USED TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE.

Personal Consecration means this devotion of self in the best possible way.

When you say you are fighting the devil as well as you can, I’m sure you are quite sincere; but wouldn’t it be better to *join in the general mobilization*, and hand yourself over to your Commanding Officer, who knows how to fight better than you do?”

Why not say to Him—

“Master! I’d like to have a bit of a hand in this fighting. I fear I’m not much use, but perhaps you can get more out of me than I can myself; anyway, I’m not going to argue about it. Here I am—body, soul, and spirit—all eager to be at work; and if you and I can stop the devil from winning, I’m quite willing to join in.”

That’s Personal Consecration, and there cannot be any real mobilization without it.

Then there is an urgent call to mobilize money as well as men.

Right well has that call been answered. *Punch* has a picture of a tiny boy walking along with “his nose in the air,” and his mother is saying—“There’s no speaking to him now he’s got his share in that there War Loan.”

Have you got your share in the War Loan of the King of kings?

Do you ever “go without” so as to be able to give a little more to the aid of the great Spiritual Campaign? Did you miss your Saturday’s football in the old peaceful days just once or twice so that you might have a sixpence for your Mission Church or your Parish Relief Fund on the Sunday? This war is opening people’s hearts and purses. There is a great call to “Purse-and-All Consecration” in the Greater War.

Mobilize your money in a bigger War Loan than that of the Government.

There are three points about it well worth considering. In God's War Loan there is (1) A great Sharing; (2) A great Security; (3) A splendid Investment.

All may share. The widow's mite is just as welcome as the rich man's cheque.

All may feel secure, for God's wealth is inexhaustible, and "out of His riches in glory He will supply all your need."

All may expect good interest. "He that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously."

CHAPTER IV

INTOLERABLE PATHS

EARLY in the war the brother-in-law of the Kaiser, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, passed with General Von Kluck through a town in Belgium which had been burnt and pillaged, and whose inhabitants had been either sent prisoners to Germany, or illtreated and killed. Amid the horrors a priest was noticed. The Duke approached him. "Your Government has brought sad misfortune upon your country by its folly in refusing our request," he said.

"Sir," replied the priest, "it was better even to bring such trouble upon the country than to betray it and sully its honour."

"A fine sentiment, no doubt," said the Duke, "but after all, *only a sentiment*."

BELGIUM IS PASSING THROUGH HER DARK HOUR BECAUSE OF A SENTIMENT.—

But what a sentiment! How we honour her for it! She has held to the path of duty and sacrifice, and found it an intolerable path; but, though she has lost all she had, she still retains her soul.

There is One Whose benediction rests upon Belgium to-day, and upon every individual soul

that has chosen the path of duty only to find it the path of suffering. From the garden of Gethsemane, from the Cross on Calvary's slopes, He calls to the world—

"Mount and see
The fullness of My Passion ; though these steps
Be hard to flesh and blood, remember this,
That *along all intolerable paths*
The benediction of My feet hath passed."

Is this merely a sentiment ? Then it is a sentiment which has sent brave men boldly into the jaws of death, and nerved them for all that should come. It is a sentiment that has cheered, and

THE ONLY SENTIMENT THAT CAN CHEER,
those who have lost their dearest and best in this hour of sorrow and sacrifice.

The Bishop of Durham tells of a lad who lay in great pain on a couch in a poor garret in London. The doctor told him that he might go to a hospital, and there he would receive care and attention until "the end," and away from the poverty and misery which were all around him. But this little fellow had found

THE INTOLERABLE PATH MADE TOLERABLE
BY THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

As he lay, he dropped little texts which he copied out ('twas all that he could do), and prayed that the folks who picked them up below, as they fell through the window, might read them and receive comfort and blessing from them.

He did not want to leave his post.

The doctor told him he would probably live longer, and die in less pain at the hospital.

“What does that matter?” he cried. “How can I die easy when He died hard?”

It makes all the difference. You’ve seen the beautiful picture of the last moments of the dying soldier. The Saviour is lifting his head, and gazing with love into his eyes. He has been through it, and He knows how to comfort. This is the great fact that makes the hard road possible, and the bitter agony bearable.

Is this only a sentiment? Then let us cling to it might and main, and never let it go. It’s a sentiment that will keep us fighting when the devil has us all but “cornered.”

Repeatedly, during this war, we have read of soldiers holding on when, by all the laws of military manœuvres, they would have been pronounced defeated, and even annihilated. Somehow they won through—in a miraculous way. Trenches knocked shapeless, defences pulped, earthworks shelled and pounded to atoms—yet they emerged, few in numbers, but undaunted in spirit, and put the foe to flight—

ALL FOR A SENTIMENT!

They were fighting for the right; holding on by eyes, teeth, and skin to their positions because their cause was sacred, and their hearts inspired by the

glorious conviction—sentiment if you will—that right will prevail.

A private of the Lancashire Fusiliers was one of these men. The gas came with its fog and sting, blinding and choking him; shot and shell shrieked around him; but when the enemy came dashing up to reap the reward of their horrible attack, he was there, working his machine gun, and cutting through the advancing line again and again until it broke up and went back.

In this spirit—the spirit which bears the unbearable, which keeps on in the intolerable paths—the war will be won.

There are, perhaps, two things that keep us going in the intolerable paths—one is to have a strong conviction and a clearly defined purpose; another is to have the "benediction of Another's feet" upon that path.

"It's grim work forcing the gates of hell," said a sailor recently returned from the Dardanelles, "but it is work that the Navy likes, despite the countless risks of death."

Why is this? Because each man aboard ship feels that the work, although intolerable, is both possible and necessary.

HE IS SET UPON "WINNING THROUGH."

Moreover, the disasters that have been suffered—losses to battleships by mine, shot, and submarine—have not cowed the British and French seamen, but rather inspired them.

These dead heroes have left "the benediction of their feet upon the intolerable paths," and those who are treading them now, and finding them "hard for flesh and blood," are ready to continue the good work.

An article in an American magazine recently was entitled

"HATS OFF TO MANDELSTAMM."

Who was Mandelstamm? He was a commonplace, ordinary Russian soldier, who trod the path of sacrifice, and was nerved to do so by the benediction of his comrades' example.

There were complaints in the ranks (this is many years before the war) concerning the way that certain officers treated the men. The senior officer inspected the regiment.

"Who made the complaint?" he asked.

A soldier stepped from the ranks. The officer pulled a pistol from his belt and shot him dead.

"Any one support this man?" asked the officer.

Another man stepped forward, and was shot; another followed, and similarly died.

"Any one else like to complain?" asked the officer with a sneer.

A pause of some seconds—then a sudden, firm ringing cry—"I do, sir," and out stepped Mandelstamm, pale but determined, and faced the officer. Twice the pistol went up to fire, and twice it fell before the amazing courage of the man—and Mandel-

stamm won the day for the regiment. Yet it was not the boldness of Mandelstamm alone, but the courage of those who died before that made the path tolerable for him. The sufferings and death of Jesus Christ were such a long, long time ago, that many people can

READ THE STORY OF THE CROSS WITH-
OUT A TREMOR.

To them it has little beauty, and no message of blessing. They cannot conjure up a vision of it, or obtain a real perception of its meaning. Yet sometimes when the flesh is scarred and injured, and the visits of pain are constant and intolerable, the reality of the Cross is perceived by the soul, and then it becomes a fount of comfort and blessing.

What intolerable paths are you called to tread? The loss of friends?

If you become a Christian, perhaps you may be called to tread this path. I have in mind a lady much beloved and esteemed in Christian circles, one who is a "Mother" to many young people, who regard her with deep affection and reverence.

At an early age she became deeply attached to a young man of great promise, and they were to have been married; but after a few months' engagement she discovered that

THE FASCINATION OF DRINK WAS GROW-
ING UPON HIM,

and after much earnest prayer she came to a decision which nearly broke her heart.

She gave him up. Her path thenceforward became almost intolerable. His friends and relations urged, argued, and reproached; her relations condemned her. Through all the trouble there was one comfort alone—the benediction of His example.

To-day the shadows have gone, and only the sunshine of His face remains. Her life has passed those troublous places, and she bears the marks of the Lord Jesus.

He had to lose friends when the shadow of the Cross fell over His path. One by one they “walked no more with Him,” thought Him foolish and fanatical, and left Him.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
ARE VISIBLE OVER ALL THE HARD PATHS
THAT ANY HUMAN BEING IS CALLED TO
TREAD—

paths of self-control, self-sacrifice, renunciation of friends, property, advantage, position—and ever they point aright.

Do you choose the path of ease and pleasure, though duty calls you to service and sacrifice? You will find not a mark of His blessing there.

Do you cling to old habits and old associations, because to forsake them will mean criticism and persecution?

You will find the new path a hard one, especially at first, but

HE HAS BEEN ALONG IT, AND HAS FELT
ITS HARDNESS,

and He is willing to tread it with you still, if you will let Him.

Are you in the thralldom of some strong temptation, which is gradually calling you to surrender your soul?

Even along that path you will see the marks where He struggled, and by keeping close to those guiding signs you will escape destruction.

“For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”

Perhaps a cloud is over your life—the burden of unforgiven sin is heavy upon you?

Do you not see the marks in His hands and feet and side, and upon His brow, where He was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities?

Look well at those marks. They whisper to you

“THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN THEE.”

By My Cross and Passion; by My Death and Burial; by My Resurrection and Ascension, you are

FOR EVER DELIVERED FROM THE BOND-
AGE OF SIN.

Along this intolerable path My Feet have trod. They won the victory for all sinners, and for you. Trust and obey. Watch the steppings of My feet, and follow them.

Where They go—however hard for flesh and blood be the paths—

THERE IS BLESSING!

CHAPTER V

THE RUINED HOME

ONE of the War Office recruiting posters displayed a shattered town and English soldiers marching out to war, while beneath are written the words, "The only road for an Englishman to travel."

Some of us who have visited Scarborough, West Hartlepool, or Southend, can form an idea of the ruin caused by shells and bombs; but this gives us the very faintest conception of the havoc that is wrought in Belgium and Northern France.

I have just read a letter from a wounded soldier, written to the mother of his "pal," who was killed by the same shell that laid him out!

"You people at home," he concludes his letter, "don't know a quarter!" This is, perhaps, our danger as a nation;

WE ARE SLOW TO REALIZE THINGS.

In both the physical and spiritual world it is true of us.

Charles Reade says in *It's Never Too Late to Mend*—

"GREAT TRUTHS HAVE TO BE WRITTEN IN BLOOD BEFORE MEN WILL RECEIVE THEM,"

and the greatest truth of all, that man is a lost sinner, in desperate need of salvation, had to be written in the red blood of Calvary's Cross before men really understood it.

I expect that those poor souls in England, who have lost their homes by the falling of a Zeppelin bomb, have a much better conception of the devastation of the Belgian and Polish villages than most of us; but no "stay-at-homes" can get such a picture of the ruins, however clever and realistic be the photographs, as the soldier whose lot it is to march through them, or to shelter himself from bullets behind the broken wall of a shattered house.

In the Old Testament we read of ruined cities and desolate homes very frequently, and particularly vivid is the description given of one place, Ziklag, which had been

RAIDED AND SMITTEN

by an Amalekite army.

David, the wanderer (afterwards King) had been engaged in raiding on his own account, but in his absence his enemies became busy, and on his return he and his men found the city burnt, and all its inhabitants carried away captive (1 Sam. xxx).

Then the historian relates that "David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice, and wept until they had no more power to weep."

Many soldiers with whom I have lately had conversations affirm that the saddest thing of all the terrors which they daily witness is this constant vision of long streams of broken-hearted refugees carrying away a few of their precious belongings, and the sight of heaps of stone and rubble which once formed the homes of these wretched people.

The Recruiting Committee of the War Office was very wise when it appealed to our young men with pictures of Belgian distress, and scenes of fire and slaughter. There is nothing so well calculated to arouse our righteous indignation and to spur us on to enlistment or fresh effort as accounts and pictures of the wrongs suffered by innocent people.

The most powerful incentive to enlistment in the army of Christ is

A SIGHT OF THE RUINS.

Some years ago an English lady missionary wrote a book called *Things as they are in Southern India*. It was a terrible book. It was hard to read, because one continually asked the question, "Can these things be? Is not the writer looking through coloured spectacles? writing through the medium of many disappointments?" At any rate the picture was very black, and, if it was a true presentment of facts, it roused one to a keen desire to go and put these matters right if it could be done. It was "a sight of the ruins" that sent our Lord Jesus Christ down to earth, to make the

crooked things straight ; that filled His soul with compassion for the sick and afflicted, and that

GAVE HIM JUST THE RIGHT MESSAGE

for such different people as Nicodemus, the Pharisee, the rich young ruler ; the sinful woman at the well of Samaria ; the impetuous, but weak disciple, Peter.

It was a "sight of the ruins" that sent Father Damien off to the lepers ; Elizabeth Fry and Sarah Martin to care for the prisoners ; Livingstone, Carey, Henry Martyn, and Coleridge Patteson to heathen lands ; Dr. Barnardo, Lord Shaftesbury, George Müller and many others to the haunts and purlieus of vice in our large cities.

It is this same "sight of the ruins" that sends the stout-hearted man, or the gentle woman, in among the drink and immorality of places from which many people shrink quite naturally and reasonably. But the question arises—

HAVE YOU, MY READER, HAD "A SIGHT
OF THE RUINS"?

The broken-down state of your own soul—have you seen that ? The need of restoration and reformation,—is that clear to you ?

A Christian gentleman was once riding on the box of an old stage-coach, the driver of which was using the most repulsive and profane language. He made friends with him without rebuking him, but at the end of the journey asked him a favour.

“ Will you pray a short prayer—only five words—every day for a month ? ”

“ Certainly, sir,” said the coachman, wonderingly.

“ Then pray ‘ O Lord, show me myself ! ’ ”

“ Oh, I can do that easily enough, and no one will be much the better or the worse for it,” remarked the coachman.

But when the gentleman, a month later, mounted his old seat, it was a very quiet and subdued coachman who sat beside him. He looked at the passenger almost angrily ; then burst out with—

“ Sir, I’m the most miserable man alive.”

“ What’s the matter ? ” said the gentleman, sympathizingly.

“ It’s that prayer, sir ! I’ve said it, as I promised ; but I wouldn’t have promised if I’d known. Sir ! I’m the worst man living, and that awful prayer haunted me, and showed me what I really am, and I shall never have a happy moment again.”

Then the story goes that the Christian persuaded the coachman to pray instead

“ LORD, SHOW ME THYSELF,”

with the blessed result that the miserable man found Christ and happiness at the same time.

But the point of the story for our purpose is this, that, in answer to his prayer,

THE HOLY SPIRIT OPENED HIS EYES, AND
GAVE HIM A “ SIGHT OF THE RUINS,”

and thus broke down his self-sufficiency, and made him see his need of a Saviour.

When David and his men caught sight of poor burnt-out Ziklag, and found that they had lost homes, property, wives, family, everything, they wept, we are told, “until they could weep no more”—but the ruin and misery worked good for David in this respect, that

IT DROVE HIM BACK ONCE MORE TO GOD.

The “prodigal son” of the parable in St. Luke xv. fared badly enough, and would probably never have returned to ways of decency and righteousness but for the fact that one day, while sitting among the swine, he suddenly saw himself, and caught sight of his wrecked and ruined life, his moral dilapidation, and

BACK HE WENT TO THE LOVE OF HIS FATHER.

There he realized, even more than before, how great was his fall from grace; but he was soon taken in hand, and restored to the former blessings—nay, to greater privileges than ever!

Studying the history of David, we notice that he had a long lapse from pious ways. He had been working out his own plans, not God’s; his prayers had not been real; he had even lived among the enemy, and acted a living lie to secure his safety.

One sight of Ziklag was enough. The ruins spoke of God’s judgment; they showed David that God’s hand could search him out and punish him when

hiding ; they taught David of the woes that befell others (his six hundred men) because of his own wilfulness and folly.

In short, those ruins

WOKE HIM UP, AND SHOCKED HIM INTO
REMEMBRANCE OF GOD.

Whatever our soldiers are doing in England, in the trenches they are reading God's Word and praying.

One new chum pulled out a little Testament "somewhere in France" the other day, and rather hoped no one would notice.

"Wot yer got there, matey?" came from a dozen mouths, and, on hearing that it was the "Old Book," the men besought him to read it aloud, which he did.

There's no false pride or sham belief out there. A sight of the ruins has given the soldiers a sense of the nearness of eternity.

"It might be my turn any minute," thinks Tommy, and deep down in his heart he ponders over his chances when this life ends for him.

WHY WAIT TO BE SHOCKED INTO
REASONABLENESS?

The simple knowledge of Belgium's sore need was enough to secure many recruits for this glorious war. Stories of maimed children, murdered civilians, outraged women serve, perhaps, to give us a clearer "sight of the ruins," but a little hard thinking

would show us our duty even without these stories and pictures.

HOW MUCH PLEADING, PREACHING, PERSUADING IS NECESSARY BEFORE WE ENLIST
IN THE ARMY OF JESUS ?

I saw a crowd on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral. A soldier was asking for recruits, telling the story of Belgium, and of England too (for she has her ruins now), and a few stepped forward to answer the appeal. They had caught a glimpse of the ruins, they had seen the need, and heard the call.

I saw another crowd, in Hyde Park, near the Marble Arch. A soldier of the Cross was pleading there, telling the story of Calvary, and of the desperate need of human hearts ; how slow and unsatisfactory was the response ! Remember Calvary ! Think of the Devil's work there ! Enlist in your Master's army, and fight the evil that culminated in the bitter Cross.

REMEMBER CALVARY ! AND ENLIST FOR
CHRIST.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOOK OF THE SECOND CHANCE

EVERY newspaper and magazine seems to have printed the story of the soldier who lost his nerve when engaged upon desperate work recently at the Front. They relate (and the story is true) how at one time in the early days of the war a sudden panic seized him, and he fled in sheer terror, leaving his braver comrades to encounter the dangers alone, and how for his cowardice he lost his stripes, and was sent in disgrace to the rear.

Then came a time when

EVERY MAN AVAILABLE WAS SENT TO
THE FRONT—

coward or brave, fighter or non-fighter, and even commissariat men, ambulance workers, and transport drivers were for a time thrust into the firing-line to hold on against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy.

Among these figured the degraded soldier. Circumstances gave him

A SECOND CHANCE,

and this time he "made good."

Among the fighters in this desperate crisis, none were braver than he. He seemed to be possessed with a superhuman courage, as though to wipe out the memory of former stains.

No story of brave deeds in the Great War has more human interest than this—the account of how a man "rose again" after a fall. How often in life do we meet with this?

I remember a cup-tie once in which the ball was driven in from the corner-flag, square across the goal to the centre forward. He swung at it, missed it completely—then with a sudden twist round, even as he overbalanced, he banged it through with the other foot.

I remember a Test Match—England *v.* Australia—in 1893 I believe, when F. S. Jackson, then quite a "youngster," played a long innings of 91. Towards the end he hit a ball to Darling at square leg, but owing to the encroachment of the spectators, the catch was missed. A few balls later, Jackson purposely repeated the stroke, and

GAVE DARLING ANOTHER CHANCE,

which the Australian promptly accepted.

We meet with the same things not only in sport but in fiction.

Scrooge gets a second chance in the *Christmas Carol*, and makes fine use of it, too.

Robinson, the London pickpocket and house-breaker, in Charles Reade's famous novel of the

prison and the gold fields, finds new openings for
A REFORMED AND HONEST LIFE

in the Australian bush.

Harry, the sensitive lad, who dreads the battle-field, and receives the four white feathers from his friends in Mason's fine novel, makes use of other chances to show his mettle, and emerges from the cloud with honour.

The whole of Victor Hugo's classic, *Les Misérables*, is nothing else than a glorious struggle to hold on to a Second Chance, which the hero, Jean Valjean, by his escape from prison has obtained.

Do you remember how he visited the old parish priest, and while receiving the most Christlike treatment and hospitality, he basely robbed him of his silver? Then, when the theft was discovered, the saintly old man not only pretended that he had given the candlesticks to Valjean, but even pressed other things upon him as gifts—breaking down the man's wicked heart, restoring to him his faith in God and man, and

GIVING HIM THE SECOND CHANCE THAT
PROVED THE TURNING-POINT IN LIFE.

But of all books that deal with this subject—and there are very many—no book is so full of the idea as the Book of books. You might almost call it

THE BOOK OF THE SECOND CHANCE.

I have read a most helpful volume called the

Gospel of the Second Chance, in which this fact is brought out very clearly.

A second chance! The chances of reformation and recovery of our lost estate afforded us by God are not one or two, but numberless. His mercies in forgiveness and endurance, His grace in uplifting the fallen, His love in guiding the ignorant are new every morning; they fail not, they increase and multiply rather than diminish. When Moses admonished the Israelites, he reminded them of God's readiness to give them a fresh start whenever they repented of their failures. When Samuel blamed them for choosing a king, he pointed to their past history. “How repeatedly have you rebelled against God,” said he, “yet,

WHENEVER YOU RETURNED TO GOD, HE
RETURNED TO YOU.”

The Cross is the most wonderful picture of the Second Chance that the world has ever seen. Look at the picture with which the history of the world's sin commenced. One fact stands out clearly enough—God made a creature who had the wonderful Godlike possession of a will, and that creature (Adam the first) exercised his will in opposition to God, and fell from his innocence and state of grace.

Then, after the years had passed (during which God taught by type, symbol, and prophecy the truth of the “Second Chance” to His people), there came another Man (Adam the second) Who also was tempted, but

REMAINED FAULTLESS AND FULL OF GRACE, redeeming by His example and conquest the people, who, through the sin of the first man, had lost their chance of inheriting God's favour.

“ Oh, wisest love, that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive *afresh* against the foe,
Should strive—and should prevail.”

Every philanthropic institution that has been founded to meet human need rests upon this wonderful Gospel of a Second Chance.

Living as I have done in the midst of some thousands of children rescued from all conditions of need and distress by the late Dr. Barnardo's agencies, this fact is borne upon me day by day.

But another fact of even greater importance has been impressed upon me, and that is the fact that
**THERE IS NO REAL SECOND CHANCE IN LIFE
OUTSIDE THE REALM OF JESUS CHRIST.**

In Joseph Hocking's story, *The Trampled Cross*, an agnostic and a Christian worker each attempts the problem of moral regeneration among certain people. The agnostic founds clubs, and gives money, and lectures upon goodness and kindness, and the folly of sin and crime, with the result that, after a certain stipulated time, those who have not gone away from him come to ask him (misunderstanding his efforts) if he is not going soon

TO TELL THEM ABOUT JESUS CHRIST !

The Christian worker, on the other hand, not only can point to actual change of life on the part of several of his people, but one of the cases pronounced hopeless by the agnostic has left the club and come to the Mission Hall to find the joy and blessing of

A REAL AND THOROUGH CONVERSION TO
GOD!

This story can be substantiated in real life over and over again, but all these arguments and reasons are like the majority of sermons and addresses—no use unless you apply them to yourself. What about yourself, dear brother or sister? Look at the recruiting posters. What was the mission and purpose of each one? Not to tell you facts about the war. These you know already. Not to horrify you with details about the *Lusitania* or the *Armenian*. Your indignation over these atrocities is keen enough. No! Their mission is to concentrate these facts, and to apply them to you personally. You know that poster with a line of soldiers, but one is left out; where he should stand there is a short, decisive sentence to make people “think.”—“This place is for you to fill.”

Now let this straight talk appeal to you in the same way!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE SECOND
CHANCE THAT CALVARY GAVE YOU? ~

Calvary rolled the burden of sin from off your

back. What a chance to start upon a new and joyful path? Sins forgiven, loads lightened, an unimpeded course, all because of Calvary! Have you seen it? Do you know it? What are you going to do about this second chance? Let it slip by? Surely not! It would be the maddest folly. Believe and receive, else you may be like the citizens of Jerusalem to whom Christ said—"Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together to Me . . . but

YE WOULD NOT."

They lost their chance. They never had another, and swift fate overtook them.

"The Spirit and the Bride say COME; and let him that heareth say COME; and let him that is athirst COME."

The Holy Ghost calls you; the Church calls you; all who hear the message join to call you; and

IF YOUR HEART IS REALLY ATHIRST

for a second chance of registering yourself in the Army of Christ, and fighting for Him against sin, the world, and the Devil, then drop all other considerations, and, without any further delay,

COME!

CHAPTER VII

THE ANGELS OF MONS

DO you believe in the Angels of Mons ?

This used to be, in the early days of the war, a favourite way of opening conversation.

Every soldier who came back from France for a few days' furlough was met with the question, " Did you see them ? "

Every one was " for " the angels or " against " them ; the discussion was continued in the papers, and correspondents wrote from many addresses saying that they had met with such and such a soldier who had seen them clearly and was prepared to give evidence, etc., etc.

Others pooh-poohed the whole matter and declared its impossibility. In any case, true, or not true, the story seized hold of the imagination of the people, because most of them wanted to believe it true !

How eagerly we snatch at anything which bears witness to the existence of another world !

There is so much that is mysterious, and so little that is known for a certainty, that almost any

spiritualist, with the most absurdly improbable yarn, will find a following.

Some people, on the other hand, are thoroughly sceptical by nature. They will laugh at the idea of any news of the unseen world being allowed to filter through to the material world. Like St. Thomas they say, "Except I touch, handle and see for myself, I will not believe"; but such people will often

NOT BE PERSUADED THOUGH ONE ROSE
FROM THE DEAD.

There is no doubt that the war has killed many forms of atheism, so called. However indifferent she may have been before to the calls of religion,

THE MOTHER WHO HAS LOST HER ONLY
SON AT THE FRONT

cannot accept as fact the idea of his annihilation.

His soul, she feels, goes "marching on."

He was young, vigorous, talented; why were these gifts bestowed upon him?

Can a rifle bullet, or a lump of jagged iron, or an explosive shell put an end, in one moment of time, to all this promise?

Did the remorseless death which singled him out shatter merely his body, or did it also quench that smiling soul which looked out from his bright eyes, and sang the song of life so cheerfully among his fellows?

No! She cannot think so! Through her agony and disappointment hope beams with the promise of resurrection and reunion, and there follows inevitably, after the murmurings and questionings have died down, a faith in One Who can straighten out life's crooked ways, and turn troubles into blessings.

The story of the Angels at Mons has been accepted by so many people and has brought comfort to the hearts of so many, that it will be a good thing to look at it and find out whether this comfort is based upon a firm or insecure foundation.

We may regard the story, then, as (1) the narrative of a fact; or (2) we may suppose that in the desperate condition in which our army, during the famous retirement, at one time found itself,

SOME MIRACLE OF DIVINE HELP WAS
CONSIDERED NECESSARY,

and the story arose in consequence.

Several reasons have been advanced for not believing the story. Some consider that our soldiers were in such a state of mental and physical exhaustion that their tired eyes were more likely than not to imagine they saw a vision, and that some sudden brightness, which can be quite easily explained from natural causes, was translated by them into a host of angels, clad in white, and armed in defence of the hard-pressed troops.

The author of a book called *The Bowmen of*

Mons states his conviction that the whole tale arose from an expansion of the idea in his book. He describes a desperate battle, in which the English, when on the point of being overcome by the Germans, suddenly hear a strange medieval war cry, and behold their ranks reinforced by a company of the famous old English archers who fought at Cressy and Agincourt, and came to the assistance of their brethren down the ages.

There may be some truth in this explanation ; it would help to shape the story, at any rate ; but this theory overlooks the fact which seems to be well established, that

SOMETHING REALLY DID HAPPEN

which befriended and saved the worn-out British soldiers that day.

What was it that happened ?

No satisfactory explanation, apart from the story of the angels, has yet been given, to show why the Germans, who were advancing in irresistible might, suddenly stopped, and gave the British time to reach a safer position and entrench themselves.

What checked the enemy ?

This unanswered question brings us right up to the margin which separates the seen from the unseen.

Failing to find a material explanation, the mind seeks a spiritual one ; hence the widespread acceptance of the " angel story."

There are two problems which I think we have to solve—

1. Is a vision of angels possible to human beings? If so, was it likely that it would be granted to such men?

2. Does it really matter whether the story is true or not?

If it is false, is belief in spiritual forces any the less likely than before?

In answer to the first question we have a wonderful historical parallel. The story is told in the Old Testament, in the account of the siege of Dothan (2 Kings vi.).

A Syrian army was sent to take the city of Dothan, and to capture the prophet Elisha, who dwelt there.

Rising early one morning, the servant of Elisha looked forth from the city walls, and, to his dismay, saw that the city was surrounded by a hostile army.

He called to his master. “Alas, Master! How shall we do?”

There was no terror, however, in the prophet’s reply, for he had seen something that rendered him calm in the midst of the danger.

“Fear not,” he said, “they that be with us are more than they that be with them!”

Before the young man could ask in astonishment where these numerous helpers might be, a miracle was wrought!

Elisha prayed, "Lord, open the eyes of the young man, that he may see"; and he saw, and lo! the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

In this story, then, we have a direct statement that

AN ANGEL HOST CAME TO DEFEND THE
SERVANT OF GOD AGAINST HIS FOES!

Is there any reason why it should not happen again?

Some would say that the circumstances were very different on the two occasions.

In the one case God helped a solitary man, who was the most religious and most godly of his time. He was, they would affirm, so much in touch with the Divine already, that one vision more or less was of little consequence. Moreover, God had already revealed to him the dispositions of the Syrian army, a privilege not vouchsafed to any ordinary man.

On the other hand, the vision of angels is supposed to have appeared to a large and mixed company of soldiers, which comprised men of all shades of religious belief and moral characters, and some of no belief and perhaps no piety of character at all.

Why should God send them a vision?

Elisha was already in touch with God; is it

likely that these men were so greatly in touch with God that a heavenly vision would be granted to them? There is a reasonableness about these questions, and perhaps the facts are not overstated.

But the arguments fail to fill up *all* the conditions.

These men of Mons were in sore need ; humanly speaking, hopes were dead ; and it must be remembered that

GOD IS NEVER SO NEAR AS WHEN HE IS
SORELY NEEDED.

Among that band of weary men there were surely some to whom God was a living reality ! some who, though not prophets, might receive visible token of God's favour ; and it must be borne in mind that

EVEN THE SERVANT WAS VOUCHSAFED
THE PROPHET'S VISION

in answer to prayer !

Many officers and men were praying for God's help during that splendid but terrible retirement. God answers prayer ! There is abundant evidence to prove that, as we have said, something did happen.

What was that something if not the direct intervention of God ?

If God did intervene, upon which side would He fight, if not upon the side of that army which

counted honour and righteousness and love of the brethren (the Belgians and French)

DEARER THAN LIFE ITSELF

though some of the soldiers in that army might not be renowned for saintliness of character ?

For the time, at any rate, they were men battling for the right, men praying for Divine help, and men in the direst extremity of peril !

Is not the help of God given to such men as these ?

If God ever parts the veil for a moment, could He not have done so if He thought fit to cheer and reassure those who were fighting His battles, as we believe ?

The answer to the second question, whether it really matters, may be given in the negative.

If the soldiers saw an army of angels, the vision was granted *to meet the needs of the moment*, and proves nothing about God that was not known before.

It is not claimed that every one saw the vision ; it is merely said that SOME did.

You know the story of the Irishman who was accused of theft ; six people saw him commit the crime. He protested that it was not fair to convict him as he could produce fifty who had not seen him.

Numbers of soldiers have stated that they saw nothing at all ; this evidence is useless. Many

people, alas, have nothing which could possibly be termed “spiritual vision”; to scorn other people who state that they believe in “the old, old story of unseen things above” is merely to repeat the folly of the Irishman.

But does it matter whether one man, six men, or twenty men, saw the angels, or whether no man saw them?

No! it does not matter! for it may be confidently asserted that

SEEN OR UNSEEN, THE ANGELS WERE
THERE!

The world is full of them!

We say that a “Special Providence watches over children.” What do we mean by that save that, when a child is in peril, the angels of God rush to save him with their outspread wings?

Are we grown so sceptical that we have ceased to believe in angels at all? I know of a child whose brain received a paralysing shock years ago through hearing a gruesome ghost story.

Shall we frighten children into obedience by talking of the terrors of the mythical “bogey man,” or fill them with rapturous anticipation of the visit of Santa Claus, or beguile the tedium of rainy days with good, old-fashioned fairy stories (all of which the child will long regard as true), and yet fail to fill the darkened bedroom.

WITH THE PRESENCE OF THE MINISTER-
ING ANGELS

who have winged their way from God ?

Shame upon such folly !

If God is real, why should His word be doubted, and why should there not be multitudes of tender, loving guardians of the soul, to watch over it in days of earth, and to speed it safely homeward when it is called away ?

So I tell my little ones at bedtime the story of the watching of angels, not because I wish to lull them into restful, trustful sleep, but

BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THE ANGELS

with all my heart and soul, and find no difficulty in the story of the angels of Dothan, or, for that matter, in the story of the angels at Mons, though I do not say for certain that they did appear.

The word angel means, as you know, messenger. It is contained in the word Ev-angel-ist, which means "Messenger of good." Angels therefore need not always be spiritual beings, they may be human beings.

It is quite right, for instance, to speak of Florence Nightingale as an angel of love and pity, or to twist her name into the well-known anagram,

FLIT ON, CHEERING ANGEL !

There is nothing fanciful or overdrawn about this title.

She was an angel, a messenger of love and help, in every sense of the word. We, too, as messengers of the love of Jesus to thirsting souls, or as messengers of sympathy to a mourning heart, may be just as truly angels of God.

Here is a story of a human angel, which is taken from the history of Dr. Barnardo's Homes.

I remember one day there were special needs ; there were dark times, as there often are when you seek for money for God's work.

But God is faithful and provides in ways unguessed.

I remember that Barnardo prayed earnestly that morning. We did not know the full extent of the need, but we joined in very heartily. Then we came together, he and I, in a cab to Stepney Causeway. There, in the office, sat a woman, very plainly dressed, and the assistant said—

“ Doctor, this lady wants to speak to you.”

“ And what can I do for you ? ” he asked.

“ Well,” she said, “ I want to give you something.” And thereupon he held out his hat to get it.

She said, “ I very much admire your work, and especially that no destitute case is ever refused. She then dropped a bit of paper into his hat. It was easy to see that it was a gift, a thousand-pound-note !

He was rather sobered at that. With the note

still in his hat, he said, "Madam, it is exceedingly good of you."

But she went on, "I am very glad to see that the Homes are always open, and that the Faith of Jesus Christ is always evident, and because of that I will give you this." And she dropped another thousand-pound-note into his hat.

Even he was taken aback at that. "And whom have I to thank for this?" he asked, after she had quickly dropped into his hat a third note for a like amount.

"The Lord knows," she said.

"But may I not acknowledge it in *The Times*?"

"No, you need not do anything"; and before we knew, she was off, that nameless lady, into the heart of London, leaving her gift behind, and there stood Dr. Barnardo with the three notes in his hat!

Angels' visits, we say, are few and far between. They need not be.

We may not have the means to face a great need with a great gift like the lady of our story, but we can all bring a small gift to relieve a small want, and, like the angels of Mons, or the angels of Dothan, can come in the nick of time to the help of one who is sorely beset by temptation, or grievously tried in the furnace of affliction, or anxiously seeking for the truth and faith in God.

There was a small boy, living in a miserable

home, whose father was a drunkard and a bully. His mother was delicate and the boy loved her deeply, and strove to make life happier for her. A kindly disposed gentleman, favourably impressed by the lad, offered to take him away to live with him ; but the boy, to his surprise, refused to go.

“ You’ll be much better off with me,” said his friend.

“ I know,” said the boy, “ but if I go away,
THERE’LL BE NO ONE TO GET BETWEEN ! ”

When the truth came to light, it was found that the drunken father was in the habit of thrashing his wife unmercifully at times, and this loving boy would throw himself in front of his mother and protect her from the father’s cruel blows to the best of his power.

He “ got between.”

Surely there are times when we, each of us, can get between to some purpose ! Can we not intervene like the angels, between some one and his foes—sin, sorrow, despair, poverty, oppression ?

There are many beleaguered souls to-day crying for deliverance, longing for a helping hand and friendly word.

BE AN ANGEL, AND GET BETWEEN !

“ If you had known how my heart ached to-day,
I think you would have stepped a little way
Out of your path, to smile, and take my hand ;
You did not understand.

Your heart was full to do some wondrous deed,
Something to bless the great world in its need—
Mine was too small; yet, by one word or touch,
You might have helped so much.

Yet, while I speak, the swift thought runs me through,
That I who blame may be blameworthy too,
That others round me needed help,—and I
Absorbed in self, passed by.”

KATHERINE ALISON BROCK,

CHAPTER VIII

A WAR OF ATTRITION

THE present war has undone many theories of warfare. For one thing, it is a War of Attrition—of wearing down. The forces are so well matched that the contest often looks like a “draw,” until one realizes that there are hidden powers at work which must not be overlooked.

In this warfare there are few sharp, decisive victories, few overwhelming coups, few shattering blows at present, at any rate—but here a river crossed, there a bridge destroyed ; here a hill-side taken, there a redoubt blown up ; here a machine-gun captured, there a few yards of trenches occupied.

And, when we come to look into matters below the surface, we find that even in wars which were decided by crushing victories and defeats,

THESE SMALLER THINGS WERE REALLY THE
DECIDING FACTORS.

One general won because he paid greater attention to the little trivial affairs—noticed how the wind blew, observed how the country helped, or hindered, and so forth.

In spiritual battles it is much the same.

We will assume that you are taking part in Christ's campaign against the forces of the devil. Don't be surprised if you cannot deal them a smashing blow and place them *hors de combat* for good and all !

It must be

A WAR OF ATTRITION—

all at it, and always at it ; watching and praying. Read what St. Paul thought about it, and what the warfare meant to him—

“ In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report ; . . . as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

Read that carefully ; think what it means, and then compare it with the life of the best Christian you know, and you will not be surprised that the devil was up and at St. Paul like a roaring lion, while he seems

TO LEAVE PRESENT-DAY CHRISTIANS ALONE

as hardly worth spending shot and shell upon them.

Watching this War of Attrition from a distance, and only occasionally hearing of some definite success, one becomes occasionally inclined to wonder if our Cause will win, after all. Pessimists abound—but not among the fighters, the real fighters! As you watch the spiritual war from a distance, criticizing and brooding, but not fighting (alas!), you perhaps wonder if the Church of Jesus will prevail, if good will triumph in the long run.

Get into the fighting line! That will cure your pessimism! There you may have long, tedious watching, unpleasant experiences, hazards and risks untold, but

YOU WILL NEVER DOUBT THE ULTIMATE
SUCCESS OF YOUR CAUSE.

The more you know of your Commander's Power and Patience, the more you trust Him, and “stick at it through thick and thin,” the more hopeful you will be—and presently will come the great advance, the big PUSH, and victory will reward you for the long years of waiting and watching. You cannot see the ranks of the enemy thinning and weakening—but they are; you cannot feel his courage flagging and his resources failing—but they are; and if you will only watch and pray, your Commander-in-Chief will wear the Prince of Evil out, and lead you and your fellows to glorious triumph.

Striker Jones was one of the worst men in his gang.

HE SWORE HARDER AND DRANK MORE heavily than any of his men. But he became converted, and with him it was indeed a war of attrition.

To his mates' surprise he kept his pledge, and held to his Christian vows.

"Wait a bit," they said to each other, "until the hot weather comes, and the thirst gets on him, and we'll see how he does then." But the hot weather made no difference. From admiration, his friends passed to amazement. Then they asked him—

"How do you manage to keep from the drink when the sweat pours off you?"

"Well," said Striker Jones, "I feel as if I shall never win through, and the day's awful long with the thirst on me. So I pray at ten o'clock, 'Oh, Lord, keep me straight until eleven o'clock.' And He does! Then at eleven I pray, 'O Lord, keep me right until twelve,' and He does again. And I keep at it until work's over, and

HE KEEPS ME ALL THE TIME."

If you are not yet an enlisted Christian let me appeal to you to become one. The fight is a fierce one, and you will not have an easy job. Why should we deceive you? Why should we say to you—

"Join the ranks of Christ's army, and you will always find yourself among nice people; always

triumph over your sins, always have a good time, and trample Satan underfoot!”

This is not true. Our soldiers were not cajoled into Kitchener’s army by the promise of good times and good pay.

They joined because they knew there were
STERN DUTIES TO BE DONE, FIERCE FOES
TO BE FACED, DANGER AND DEATH ALWAYS
NEAR—

and it is a mistake to invite a man to enter the Christian warfare without telling him the cost.

A young girl had fearfully bad hands; they were “gathered,” and so sore that she could not bear them touched.

A well-meaning friend took her to the doctor, who looked at them, and then opened a case of scissors. She shrank away and grew pale. “Don’t worry, Nellie,” said the friend, “he won’t hurt you.”

“Why do you say that?” said the doctor. “How do you know?” Then turning to the girl, “I shall hurt you, but I must. Now be brave, and it will soon be over.”

When it was finished, Nelly thanked him.

“I COULDN’T HAVE STOOD IT IF YOU
HADN’T TOLD ME,”

she said; “I should have fainted.”

Indeed, it is a mistake to coax people into the Service of Christ by giving them wrong impressions—for to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ involves

the endurance of hardness and the suffering of persecution. Will you not count the cost, *and then enlist*? The joy of service is great, even if the warfare be weary and long; the love of your Captain is real, even if His commands are sometimes hard to obey; and victory is certain ~~to~~ those who fight manfully onward, resolved to triumph in the strength of Christ.

“ Say not ‘ the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The foeman fainteth not, nor faileth,
And, as things have been, they remain.’ ”

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars,
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e’en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field ! ”

CHAPTER IX

THE DEVIL'S BLOCKADE

ON February 17, 1915, the first Great Blockade was upon us! Submarines began to prowl around our coasts. Explosive mines awaited incautious and unfortunate vessels.

Were you thinking of even a short trip in a coasting vessel—from Newcastle to Leith, or from London to Middlesbrough?

You thought twice; then you altered your plans and went by land, to avoid the danger.

At any moment on your sea voyage a submarine might suddenly show herself close at hand, and a deadly torpedo might come tracking across the water

TO STRIKE HARD UPON YOUR DEFENCE-
LESS VESSEL,

and send both it and you to the bottom of the ocean. So beware lest the ship of your life, *carrying that priceless cargo, an immortal soul*, be suddenly smitten, in its journey o'er the waves of this troublesome world by the hidden, deadly weapons of Satan!

The owners of the merchant ship may decide to run the risks, or they may decide to keep their ship in port ; but you have no such option ! You are bound to journey over life's waters. You cannot withdraw from the voyage, and thus escape harm and accident.

Do you ever excuse yourself from the performance of Christian duty by the saying : " Oh, I make no profession of being a Christian " ?

Some people actually imagine that they become free from all responsibility as regards their soul's welfare by this simple statement. In these days of war, every British subject, man, woman, or child realizes two things : (1) that the war spells danger to every one, fighter or non-fighter ; (2) that in this war every one can help in some real way.

Spiritually the same fact is true. The never-ceasing war between God and the forces of evil—

DOES CONCERN YOU

whether you're actually taking a part in it or not—and the devil's blockade will touch you somewhere, whether you recognize your responsibilities or not.

YOU CAN'T KEEP OUT OF THIS WAR,

whatever be your opinions—and the man who is selfishly keeping aloof, not giving the help of his person, or his purse, not denying himself the luxuries of life for his country's sake, is actually hindering his country, for to withhold his hand means to

lengthen the war and to postpone the declaration of victorious peace.

It's just the same in spiritual things. If you're not helping, you're hindering.

IF YOU'RE NOT ON THE LORD'S SIDE,
YOU'RE AGAINST HIM.

He said so Himself, and His word is truth.

In any case, this submarine and mine peril affects you—your safety, your food supply, your peace.

I remember being present at an open-air meeting where one of the speakers took a very bold course. He had lived and worked many years in the district, and had a comprehensive knowledge of the people and the affairs round about. The street was a street of shops in the West End of London, and in front of the shops stood stalls, with goods of all kinds for sale.

It was a Temperance meeting, and the old man was speaking of the actual harm wrought by strong drink upon the business affairs of prosperous men. He actually pointed to shop after shop, and called his audience to test the truth of what he said.

“Do you remember that fine fellow Jones, the chemist?” he asked. “Where's his trade now? Gone through drink! And Robinson, the butcher, who had his stall yonder? A prosperous married man with a fine, healthy family. Where are they now? Robinson in prison, his business bankrupt, his home broken up, and his family scattered—all

because he became fond of drink. And Brown, the draper, not so many years a Sunday School teacher and Christian worker? Now down-at-heels and miserable—all through drink."

One after another he named his cases, and none dared contradict him, for what he said was all too true. And into almost every house Drink,

THAT DEVIL'S SUBMARINE, HAD ENTERED

to do its deadly work.

Never did I hear such an impressive argument for temperance, and such a powerful appeal to well-known facts. Heads were nodding assent all round the circle of the crowd, though here and there the facts were received with frowns and angry looks.

After all, to tell of

SHIPS THAT HAVE GONE DOWN

is one of the best ways to warn others that the Devil has no scruples and that he will attack when and how, and what he likes!

There are some people who have been living lives of Christian service for years; apparently they were armed and equipped at every point—yet the Devil's blockade of their souls is proving effective. They are invulnerable to attack above the water-line. Gross temptations do not succeed with them. Their Christian upbringing, or their moral sense, keeps them out of danger from the open perils of

drunkenness, gambling, impure living. Yet the Devil, with apparently no chance of success,

HAS COMMENCED A BLOCKADE AGAINST
THEM.

He attacks them quietly and secretly. They cannot afford to laugh at this blockade, or to think that he has no power to destroy their souls because he has failed with the weapons that overwhelm others.

The Devil has power—alas!—and often he deals a very serious and destructive blow to the soul of a Christian worker by means of

A CAREFULLY-PREPARED TORPEDO NAMED
SPIRITUAL PRIDE!

That is why some Christians are so unbearable. The Devil whispers “Well done!” to them every time they turn out to an early Communion, while others sleep; every time they take up a piece of Christian work which others have shirked; every time they resist a temptation which has caused others to fall. “Well done, good and faithful servant!” he says, “your Master must be proud to have such a fellow-worker as you. Ah! if only all Christians had your energy and enthusiasm.”

A submarine attack is the only kind likely to damage a country whose Naval Position is so strongly in evidence as Great Britain's; and a calculated and carefully-planned campaign of secret

attack upon the soul of a Christian is the only kind likely to succeed—and these attacks come in a

VERY SUBTLE AND A VERY UNEXPECTED
MANNER.

Some time ago, two of our gallant cruisers were sunk by a submarine attack because they refused to leave another cruiser which had been torpedoed, and whose crews they stood by to save.

The Christian has to stand by to save the perishing souls of his fellow-men. Let him not think that he will escape attack because he is doing a noble and Christlike work. Nay! he is all the more liable to sudden and concealed attack because he is doing this work. It is not reasonable to suppose that the Devil will leave us alone, just when we are damaging his cause the most. That is exactly the reason why he is more eager to strike, and to strike hard, before too many souls have been brought to the light.

It's a particularly dangerous time when a clergyman, or a Church Army captain, or nurse, or a Christian worker begins to get popular in the parish or district, and things begin to work smoothly.

If the Devil doesn't begin to make trouble, it may be safely said that

THE OPPOSITION ISN'T DOING HIS CAUSE
MUCH HARM.

If we're really cutting off his supplies, and really

hampering his comfort, he'll soon begin to blockade us, and to slip in an ugly torpedo or two, until things don't look quite so simple for us as they did. However, there's *a way of escape* even from these submarine, under-the-surface attacks. Quick eyes, swift flight, skilled pilotage, all serve to avert disaster.

H.M.S. *Birmingham* was steaming in the North Sea. Suddenly a tiny little ripple was seen on the waves. What looked like a small piece of wood was sticking up through the water. It was the periscope of an enemy's submarine. Quickly the guns were trained upon the tiny mark—the first shot hit the periscope and "blinded" the submarine, rendering her harmless; the next few shots completed the work, and the dangerous foe sank from sight, shattered and harmless.

What can we do when the Devil declares a blockade upon the soul?

Only the same acts to which the ships resort for safety.

WATCH for the dangerous little marks of devilish attack—the first indications of spiritual peril—the desire for pleasure, luxury, excitement, gratification of appetite, anxiety to argue in self-defence,—watch for them, and shatter them before they have time to reveal themselves as something far worse.

Pray—for

PRAYER SPEEDS YOU FAST FROM THE
ENEMY,

and brings up to your assistance a mighty HELPER, who can overcome even hidden foes, training guns upon the enemy which your little craft could never carry. Above all, let your Pilot have His way with you. He is your Captain too, and can manage your life better than you can yourself.

With His skill to direct you, and His power to assist you, you will come forth unhurt from the Devil's blockade—and that precious cargo, your immortal soul, will reach Harbour safely, having suffered no serious damage from the foe, because

YOU TRUSTED YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST.

CHAPTER X

CONTRABAND CARGOES

“Things are seldom what they seem—
Skim milk masquerades as cream,
High-lows pass as patent leather,
Jackdaws strut in peacock’s feather.”

SO sings the mystic lady in the opera *Pinafore*—and, no doubt, if everything was in fact what it appeared to be, life would be a much simpler matter.

We shouldn’t be liable to heart-breaking discoveries, as when a mother finds that her steady-going son has really been in bad company for weeks ; or the bank-manager examines the books of his most trusted clerk, and finds that embezzlement has been taking place ; or the vicar learns that his most valued helper is secretly drinking ; or the company of soldiers attacking an innocent-looking wood, suddenly find themselves raked with a galling fire from concealed rifles.

Another sad discovery is when

WE FIND WITHIN OURSELVES SIN AND
WRONG,

whose existence we had not suspected.

Some time ago the steamer *Phos*, trading between Norway and Melbourne, arrived at the Victoria Docks of the latter city with a cargo apparently composed, as usual, of peas, beans and flour. But the Custom House officials had their suspicions and boarded the ship to make a thorough search, and it was found that she was stocked from stem to stern with contraband of all kinds—intoxicants, spirits, tobacco, silks and revolvers—hidden in cunningly contrived cupboards, under the cushions of chairs and settees, and even in the ship's water-tanks.

Time after time the voyage had been made, and the deceit successfully carried out ; but at last came the day of discovery, and the captain and owners of the vessel received the punishment which they had long escaped, but were bound, some day, to incur.

It may be that

THERE IS A DAY OF DISCOVERY

for you.

Outwardly, how fair your life has been ; you have (and deservedly) a character for being a right-down good fellow, always ready to do a pal a good turn, ready to stand up for what you think is right, not a loafer or a drinker, but a man whose word is his bond, and “ as good as many of those folks who go to Church and make a big show of their religion.”

No doubt this is all true ; but

WHAT ABOUT THAT UNCONFESSED SIN,
THAT SECRET BAD HABIT

within you, of which only God and yourself are aware?

Have you discovered it yet? Are you still clinging to it and indulging in it?

It may be a debt which you ought to have paid long ago, or a harsh word for which you ought to have apologized, or perhaps a feeling of jealousy, even of hatred, which you are cherishing in your heart against some one, until it has become a big black stain, all the worse because it is a secret.

Depend upon it, in every life, however fair, the outward appearance may be,

THERE'S A BIT OF CONTRABAND

somewhere, and though you put off the declaration to your own soul, and try to sail under another flag to deceive God, He'll meet you on the high seas of your life-voyage one day, and bring your vessel before His Prize Court to examine your cargo.

WHY NOT SEARCH AND CAST OUT THE
CONTRABAND GOODS YOURSELF?

Why continue day after day to avoid that self-examination which will bring you down upon your knees before God in frank confession of your sinful state? Say to Him—

"Search all my sense and know my heart,
Who only canst make known,
And let the deep, the hidden part,
To me be fully shown.

Search all my thoughts, the secret springs,
The motives that control,
The chambers where polluted things
Hold empire o'er my soul."

The old philosopher's maxim was "Know thyself!" To know ourselves—not merely to "see ourselves as others see us," but to go deeper and

TO SEE OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

is very needful, if we are to be delivered from the inward sinfulness which taints the soul of every human being.

In one of his Farther-North journeys, Lieutenant Peary discovered a meteorite in Greenland. It was a very wonderful stone, and he brought it in his vessel to New York. It proved to be a very awkward bit of cargo, however; the iron-stone in its composition had a magnetic influence over the ship's compass, and the ship's course became deflected in consequence, making steering very difficult.

It's a hard task the steering of a man's soul into Harbour when there's sin aboard! It biases his mind, confuses his judgment, paralyses his will, and in a thousand different ways

MAKES HIS LIFE TO SWERVE

from straight tracks and righteous ways.

St. Paul, who, after his conversion, ran as straight a course as most men, and towards the end of his life exclaimed: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,"

was compelled to say, in earlier days: "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me."

During warfare the word contraband takes on a new meaning. It applies to everything that is likely to assist the enemy and so prolong his resistance.

For instance, the British Government long ago declared copper contraband, and ships were stopped and searched lest they should be found with cargoes of copper.

When this became known, firms sending copper in ships to neutral countries, found it necessary to employ guile. They loaded up with bales of cotton (which was not declared contraband) and then filled the interior of these bales with copper.

It thus became necessary to stop the ships that were laden with cotton, to discover the hidden article if by chance it were there. In your self-examination, it will be needful not only to search for the recognized evil and forbidden thing, but

TO INQUIRE AS TO THE NATURE OF THE SEEMINGLY HARMLESS THINGS

lest they cloak and mask a hidden evil.

A jealous woman once sent her rival a basket of flowers. It looked like a peace offering; it proved to be a deadly weapon! Within were two venomous serpents whose bite proved fatal. Is that pleasure in which you are indulging quite as inno-

cent as you think it to be ? Even if it be all right,
THERE MAY BE A NOBLER AND HIGHER
THING

which ought to be occupying your time and attention.

You spend your nights, perhaps, at your Church Club. Good ! you might do worse !

But, perhaps you might do better ! There are not too many Christian workers in the world. Have you quite assured yourself that you are really *not* wanted as a worker ? The vicar has tried to work up that week-night service, but with poor results ; yet he might get a fine attendance if all the men in the Parish Hall and the Church Club would turn into Church just for that hour. What a help and a comfort it would be to him ! and what an impulse to the men themselves !

The *Dacia* and *Wilhelmina* carried cotton and food supplies ; innocent cargoes enough, in an ordinary way no one would dream of stopping them or interfering with their freight.

YET THEIR CARGOES SPELLED DANGER
TO ENGLISHMEN.

The danger lay in the fact that they might increase the power and the endurance of the enemy. Maybe some innocent pursuit of yours is giving your flesh, the great enemy of your spiritual life, undue power. Perhaps the pipe of tobacco, the glass of beer, the football match, the pleasant comrade, the political

discussion—even (we write it with fear and trembling) your Church-work have begun to grow too large in your life and to crowd out prayer, and Christ, and God.

We have known men whose value to their Church was great—their lives were full of Church-work ; but—

THEY HAD NO TIME FOR PRIVATE PRAYER, no time for the Christian training of their children, for sympathetic and Christlike behaviour at home. Innocent and good things were actually aiding the enemy !

“ Let not your good be evil spoken of.” Declare it contraband ! Don’t be misled by the flag under which it sails.

Your King and His Country have need of you. Seek Him and His Kingdom first, and root out from your life anything, however good it may seem, that means the exclusion of God and the encouragement of His adversaries. “ Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.” *Search your life for contraband.*

CHAPTER XI

CUTTING THE TELEPHONE WIRE

THERE'S nothing wrong in being tempted—or tried, which is the same thing ; in fact, one Apostle (St. James) writes : “ My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”

I can hear some reader saying—“ Funny sort of joy that, being tempted. I'd sooner miss that peculiar form of happiness ! Besides, I pray ‘ lead us not into temptation.’ ”

Well, to rejoice in being tempted is much the same, it seems to me, as the spirit of the young soldier who wrote : “ It's a great war whatever. Isn't it luck for me to have been born so as I'd be

JUST THE RIGHT AGE AND JUST IN THE RIGHT
PLACE ? ”

He is longing to get to grips, to have it out with the foe.

“ That's a bit of all right,” he thinks, and so it is, especially as he goes there determined to win, determined to do his level best for King and Country, not a thought of defeat in his mind.

Temptation is, after all, only an assault by the enemy, and if we meet it conscious of our superior forces, and hoping for a good set-to, its greatest danger has gone.

Day by day the British Fleet waits and waits to be attacked by the German Fleet. It longs for a sight of the foe, for a stand-up fight, because we are there to meet it, and we do not fear the result.

But many men fall, when tempted, and the course of defeat is not hard to find. There are two chief reasons—

(1) They trust in their own will-power, and refuse to ally themselves with superior and invincible forces.

(2) They have half given way to the temptation before it attacks them, because they do not recognize it as a foe.

What would you say to the man who entered his house and found a curtain on fire, and then proceeded (because the day was cold) to warm his hands at the blaze, intending to extinguish it as soon as he was sufficiently warm?

His very instincts would prompt him to rush for water, to forget his cold hands, and to put out the conflagration without delay, shouting to others to come and help him, and not being content until the last spark of fire had gone. Why? Because he knows that fire is dangerous, fire spreads, fire destroys, and, at the mere sight of it in the wrong place, he becomes at once a fire-fighter.

HE RECOGNIZES HIS FOE AND FIGHTS IT.

In the present war all the combatants have learned to employ ruses, wiles, and stratagems. Uniforms, helmets, and guns lie strewn about the ground where the dead and dying have fallen. What more easy than to take the uniform of an enemy, and wear it, so as to approach without being fired upon.

They say that the Germans employed these tactics again and again. In any case it is quite certain that that great deceiver,

THE DEVIL, DISGUISES HIMSELF AS AN
ANGEL OF LIGHT,

to do the greater damage and to allay the suspicions of those whom he attacks.

During the fighting near Warsaw, the Russians made the acquaintance of a new kind of ruse. Numbers of the enemy feigned death, and after their opponents had passed, fired into them from behind.

This is exactly the way in which our great spiritual Adversary compasses the fall of some people.

They have met him in fair fight many times, conquered him, until at last they have come to believe his power is dead within them ; then they grow careless, and ignore his existence, until

WITH A SUDDEN FEARFUL BLOW HE
RESUMES FIGHTING,

and brings the unfortunate victim to the ground. Some of Satan's ruses are very clever. He disguises the horror of his ways skilfully. He seldom attacks (at first) by the suggestion of a gross temptation. Rather he employs some simple, innocent liking of his victim's, suggests the abuse or excessive use of it, and then turns it into a means of keeping the soul from God.

This, after all, is the first plan of the Tempter's Campaign. "How can I," plots he, "keep this soul from God? How can I

SPOIL THAT LINE OF COMMUNICATION

and cut him off from help and reinforcement?" There's a photograph in *T.P.'s Great Deeds* of a man walking along leading his horse; in his ears are telephone wires, and on the animal's back is a sort of drum. Under the picture one reads—

THE LIVING LINES OF TELEPHONES ARE
SPUN OUT AS THE ARMY ADVANCES";

lower down on the same page is the photograph of another man, bending down to a telephone receiver and transmitter, and under this picture one reads—

"THUS HEADQUARTERS CAN KEEP IN
CLOSEST TOUCH WITH THE ENTIRE BATTLE-
FRONT."

Now, as you go about your daily work, you cannot expect to escape from the attacks of the foe. Few men are so foolish as to think that they are

never tempted to sin. They know that temptations are constantly round them. Has the Devil obtained this advantage over you in the struggle that he has been able to

“CUT YOU OFF” FROM HEADQUARTERS?

When did he do it? Was it when he gradually persuaded you to stop at home on Sunday and read “the sermon” out of the Sunday paper, over a pipe of tobacco, instead of going thankfully to the House of God to praise Him for His goodness?

Was it when he whispered to you that prayer wasn’t much good after all, and that you couldn’t expect

TO CHANGE GOD’S PLANS BY A FEW WORDS at your bedside, morning and night?

Was it when he told you that many parts of the Bible were shaky, and not worthy of belief, and that there were plenty of good moral books in the world, and that a “Message from Mars” did you quite as much good as any sermon you had ever heard? Or was it, perhaps, that he whispered to you one day when you thought of going to Holy Communion, that most of those who went there were hypocrites, and you’d better stay away and keep sincere?

Ah, well—it doesn’t so much matter about that question, “when was it”?

CAN THINGS BE PUT RIGHT?

“That is the question”—as Hamlet would say. How wonderful! to think of an army telegraphist going along, and, as the great drum of cable slowly unwinds itself, he talks to the general staff many miles behind him! And the general staff talks to him! Yet this is not more wonderful than the fact of God always being in communication with those who are willing to receive orders from Him, and to tell their troubles and difficulties to Him.

As you go farther and farther into positions of danger, and no outward signs of God’s presence and protection are visible, the cable (invisible) stretches and lengthens, and

GOD IS NEAR YOU, DIRECTING AND
GUIDING,

though the Devil’s attack be exceedingly fierce.

How then shall we resist temptation and defy the tempter?

First, we must fight, and fight

WITH THE INTENTION OF WINNING,

just as our soldiers, individually, intend to drive back the enemy, even to Berlin, if need be.

Secondly, we must remember that the victory has been won by our Captain, who overcame the Tempter whenever He met him.

Thirdly, we must *obey* our Captain, and not be dismayed by the fierceness of the strife.

Listen to this story of the Captain and his men.

“The trenchful of soldiers waited. Then the officer

spoke again. 'Rise!' he said, in the casual tone of the barrack square. For many it was the last order they would ever receive, and they knew it. All the men rose, excepting five, who remained prone, as if glued to the earth by their unnerving memories of home.

"The officer looked at the five without anger, and then drew, not his revolver, but a cigarette from its case, lighted it, drew two or three puffs and then said, 'Well?'

"A simple word, but how full of the patience of an elder and stronger brother, of gentle superiority, of kindly confidence, and yet also of iron will. The five men sprang to their feet. . . ."

DO YOU FEAR THE SCORCHING TEST OF THE ENEMY'S ATTACK?

Your Captain is with you! He has endured it all! He looks at you as you hesitate (so naturally) to get to grips with the Devil. "Well?" Do you hear the brotherliness and the love of His voice? Do you see the compassion in His eyes, as He asks you to go forth WITH HIM to meet the foe, and, through great strife and fiery conflict, to stand firm at last, with victory in your grasp?

Up then from the cold earth of your despair! Your foe is strong. "WELL?" Is not your Captain strong too? Rise! He calleth thee!

CHAPTER XII

MEDALS AND BADGES

A PIECE of ribbon, and a pendant, shaped Maltese Cross fashion, with the device of a lion over a crown, and beneath all, the two words "For Valour"; the whole outfit, bronze cross and ribbon, and pin, worth a few pence—yet priceless to the man who wears it. What does it mean? It means (to quote from the pen of a great military authority) that "he who wears it

ONCE UTTERLY FORGOT HIMSELF FOR THE
SAKE OF SOMEONE ELSE."

Nearly all the great nations of Christendom employ the Cross as the chief symbol of decoration for valour, because there, upon the Cross of Calvary, the bravest deed that the world has ever known was accomplished by the Son of God.

He utterly forgot Himself for me, for you, for all. He saw in that Cross the only way by which the sin of a man could be cancelled, and man's outstanding debts to God could be paid.

A brave deed! Braver even than when the

burgesses of Calais came out, with ropes round their necks, and surrendered to England's King, that their city might go free. Braver even than when Marcus Curtius leaped down into the yawning gulf in the Roman Forum, because it was decreed by the gods that Rome must cast its most precious treasure into the chasm before it could close up, and give safe passage to the crowds. And though many deeds of bravery in the present war, and past wars, or in medieval martyrdoms might be recorded, none was so wonderful and noble as the deed on Calvary, when

“For the bravest deed that e'er was done,
The King Eternal wore the crown of thorns.”

But, though only a few may wear the Victoria Cross, many may wear badges, buttons, and other signs—not to show what they *have* done, but

WHAT THEY STAND FOR.

“When I clean my buttons, I often think about THE OLD SERPENT OF BRASS ON A POLE,” said a R.A.M.C. man the other day. Let us clean our buttons a bit, and see what they teach us.

The Army Medical button has its design partly from the illustration of the famous Æsculapius, the old historical son of Apollo and Coronis—a god and a princess—two noteworthy parents—of whose medical skill it was written that he was able even to restore the dead to life. With all their skill I fear the R.A.M.C. cannot do that.

But the emblem of a serpent on a pole carries us back to a bit of Old Testament history when the Israelites in the desert were badly bitten by venomous and fiery serpents, and many were dying, until Moses sought God's face and asked Him what to do. “ Make a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole,” he was instructed, “ and tell the sufferers to raise their eyes to it, if they would be healed.” Moses obeyed—and the obedient ones among the bitten crowd felt new life and healing pour into their veins as they caught sight of the brass image aloft on the pole. And here comes in a bit of New Testament too (a very suggestive button this !), for the Lord Jesus used this Old Testament incident as

A PARABLE AND TYPE OF HIMSELF,

saying : “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him

SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVER-
LASTING LIFE.”

Since then what countless multitudes have looked in faith to Christ, and found healing and forgiveness !

WHY NOT TRY THE SIMPLE LOOK OF
FAITH ? WHY NOT GET HEALED TOO ?

It is interesting to remember that old Æsculapius

was taken on board the famous ship *Argos*, when it set forth with its

EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF FIFTY HEROES

to recover the Golden Fleece which had been stolen, and many a time his skill was employed to restore to health one or more of the gallant band; true to his reputation, when death was busy with the little band, Æsculapius was able to fetch the smitten warriors back to life again. If you want the unhealthiness of your soul put right as you sail over life's ocean,

TAKE THE GREAT HEALER ON BOARD WITH YOU!

How often have our kindly R.A.M.C. men accompanied the fighters, and cheered them both by skilled attention and by words of hope. Our prayers go with them and with the poor shattered soldiers to whom they minister. May the brazen serpent be an inspiration and a blessing to them all, and may all who clean their R.A.M.C. button learn to turn to Christ in faith, and

LOOK TO HIM FOR LIFE, JOY, AND PEACE!

The fighting regiments and companies have their buttons, no less than the healers.

Here is a fiery one—the old-fashioned hand-grenade, now come to the front again as a useful weapon of trench-warfare. Bomb throwing of any

kind is an ugly business, and often spells greater danger to the thrower than to the target.

UGLY WORDS AND FOUL EPITHETS

are more likely to injure the character of the man who hurls them, than to damage seriously the man against whom they are uttered. How different was the patience and long-suffering of the Saviour, Who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again"; when He was led before His persecutors, suffered meekly and dumbly as a sheep before its shearers, and opened not His mouth in blame or condemnation.

The Naval officers wear a button, with various combinations of crown, wreath, and anchor; emblems of royalty, victory, and steadfastness. The design signifies for British sailors the ruling of the sea, and well has it been justified by the events of the present war. The world does not yet realize what it owes to the British Navy for the protection her ships have been for hundreds of years to the commerce of nations; how the roving pirate, with his skull and crossbones, has been driven from the trade routes, and practically exterminated; neither, alas! does the heedless world realize

WHAT THE CROSS OF CHRIST HAS DONE for mankind.

How it raised up Christ from the earth, though on a strange and painful throne, and gave Him the Crown of Kingship and the Wreath of Victory,

and how the wondrous Cross, with its atoning power, remains

THE SINNER'S ONLY ANCHOR FOR HIS
WAVERING SOUL.

Neither does the heedless world yet fully comprehend how completely and uniquely this wondrous Cross has broken down the piracy and slavery of sin, and restored to fallen man the freedom of soul-communion with God,

Yes! the Navy button means a lot.

DO CALVARY AND GOOD FRIDAY MEAN MUCH TO
YOU?

The Royal Garrison Artillery wear a button with a gun and gun-carriage upon it. We are proud of the skill of these men.

Keen sighted, strong, steady fellows, they have the knack of shooting straight, and now, in the greatest war known, they will keep the foe at bay by their power to aim true and to reach the mark at which they aim.

If we aim at that subtle foe, Satan, and his Lieutenant sin, we must take our bearings from the Cross, and find our range by a right understanding of the life and death of Christ.

Then, and only then, shall we overthrow the old dragon, whose picture appears on the buttons of the Buffs, over their [fine motto, "*Veteri Frondescit Honore.*"]

'Tis only by the memory of such great acts as

Calvary, that our Christian life can blossom forth, and grow strong and fit for the conflict with the old dragon, whose teeth and claws and fiery breath threaten us with disaster. We'll clean up this button with a will, and pray to God that as on the first Good Friday,

JESUS CHRIST GRAPPLED WITH THE
ADVERSARY AND OVERTHREW HIM ;

so we, following in His footsteps by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, learned at the foot of the Cross, may finally trample and beat down Satan under our feet. Amen. So be it !

CHAPTER XIII

“LOOK AT THE MAP”

THE memory of the German Chancellor's words is with us still.

To cheer up the pessimists of his nation and to impress the neutral nations of the world with a sense of Germany's achievements in the Great War, he besought them to “look at the map.”

This glance at the map was to prove to the world that Germany was winning and that the Allies were already conquered.

There was something in the argument. It was an old and familiar argument, as we shall presently see. It sounded well; it seemed convincing; for a glance at the map of Europe

SHOWED THE ENEMY IN POSSESSION

of large tracts of land, taken by force of arms from their lawful owners.

France, Belgium, Serbia, Russia, Montenegro, had all suffered in this way. Italy seemed likely to follow their example. England had been forced to evacuate the Gallipoli peninsula. The Turks held captive a large force under General Townshend.

Persuaded by these facts, some unthinking people might have arrived at the conclusion that Germany's power was really in the ascendant, and that, before long, she would be dictating her own terms of peace to the "Entente."

But, in spite of the unpleasant truth of the invaded and occupied territory shown on the map, the chances of victory for Germany were, even then, becoming smaller every day, and her influence was on the wane.

Those who followed Bethmann-Hollweg's advice, and formed their conclusion merely from a glance at the map, were in danger of

FORMING AN IMPERFECT AND A SUPER-
FICIAL JUDGMENT ;

because

1. The map to which the Chancellor referred was merely the map which he wished them to see. It was Europe only. He purposely forbore to call the attention of the world to the whole map, from which vast tracts of once German territory were blotted out, in Africa, China, and the Pacific Ocean. Thanks largely to the British Fleet, and its crippling effect upon the ships of Germany, every German colony has passed from her possession. But the Chancellor did not wish to refer to these things. When he invited the world to look at the map, he meant "look at the successes of our arms, but overlook their failures !"

2. The judgment which we should form from a

glance at the map would have been, in every respect, superficial, because it rested entirely upon the evidence of things seen, and left out the most important evidence of things not seen.

Let us ponder over the question of these unseen forces—i.e., the undeniable forces and facts which are acknowledged to exist, but cannot possibly be shown upon a map.

There is, first and foremost, the unconquerable spirit of the oppressed nations.

Think of Belgium! Is she overthrown?

Her land is overrun, her people have been tortured, dishonoured, murdered,—yet Belgium, to-day, is in spirit, in unity, in patient endurance,

A THOUSAND TIMES GREATER THAN EVER.

She has shown that she cannot be conquered.

Serbia's sons and daughters vie with those of Belgium in superb qualities, while the whole world has looked with admiration akin to awe upon the subjects of the Czar, who, driven, crushed, and overwhelmed,

HAVE RISEN IN MIGHT ALMOST FROM
THE DEAD

to drive, crush, and overwhelm their foes in turn!

What shall we say, too, of the defiant spirit of France, or of the determination of the British, which have defied the powers of the enemy with increasing success, and are destined to triumph in the end?

NONE OF THESE THINGS CAN BE SHOWN
ON THE MAP!

The map cannot speak to us of the ceaseless, steady watching of the British warships ; the map cannot echo to the thrumming of lathes and spindles, or reflect the glow of the furnace-fires of hundreds of war-factories ; the map cannot voice the growing depression of half-starved German civilians, or the weariness of her hordes of fighting men.

To all our calculations must be added

THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

Go for a few moments in thought to an Eastern land, where, nearly two thousand years ago, a tragic scene was enacted upon a queer skull-shaped hill outside the walls of Jerusalem, where a great crowd of people—Roman soldiers on duty, priests and religious teachers of the Jews, pilgrims from foreign lands, casual sightseers, and numbers of sorrowing women, stood watching the execution of three "criminals" upon rough crosses of wood.

The chief interest was manifested in the central figure, over whose cross was the title,

THE KING OF THE JEWS ;

a title which caused indignation to some, scorn among others.

Try also to imagine if you can the unseen forces of evil, grouped round their hellish Master, to exult over this victory of their cunning and wickedness.

“See, Master, how we have dealt with the One Who came down from Heaven to upset all your plans ! Dead ! Like any other man ! We have killed Him ! Where is His triumph now ? Where are His followers ? Who believes in Him or in His Cause now, after this downfall ? What hopes can His friends have now ? Mighty Chief, thou hast conquered !”

Ay ! Look at the map, ye powers of ill !

Your vicious bands have invaded every realm of virtue, of purity, of godliness. There is no sacred region that has escaped your foul footmarks. From Eden to Calvary every heart has bowed before you, and every soul has felt the clutch of your covetous hands.

Here, on Calvary, you have struck your foulest blow, you have won your supreme victory. Life, Light, and Love died there, and

EVEN GOD HID HIS FACE FROM THE
SIGHT !

Yes ! Look at the map !

But did Calvary spell defeat ? Think again !

When Christ was murdered on Calvary, the Devil had wrought his worst, and the tide of oppression and wrong rose to its utmost height ;

BUT IT HAS EBBED AND SHRUNK EVER
SINCE !

Will you simply gaze on that woeful scene, and

forget what the Man Who hanged there, in apparent defeat, has since done for the world?

Even in the present war, with all its fierce passions, its terrible and ruthless bloodshed, its unparalleled atrocities, the Saviour of the world has walked on the battlefields, with comfort and balm for the sufferers, with the spirit of love and pity that He showed on earth; and men have died, looking into His tender compassionate face, borne aloft from earth's carnage and misery to the land where He is ever present.

Would you say that the scene on Calvary marked, with final defeat, the life and work of the Son of God? Yes! if you only “look at the map.”

Not if you took into consideration the unseen forces at work; the purity and innocence, the love and the beauty, the friendship and wisdom, of the One Who died so foully.

NO ONE COULD DESTROY THESE THINGS.

They cannot die! They are eternal, everlasting, deathless.

Do you remember the words of Carlyle?—

“Fool! Thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there to note thy jargon it therefore dies and is buried: nothing dies, nothing can die; the word thou speakest is a seed cast into time, which brings forth fruit unto eternity.”

To look at the map and judge therefrom would

have been to pronounce the Cause of Christ defeated, not once but a thousand times !

Over and over again it has seemed to be a lost Cause. Its adherents have been persecuted and slain, driven from country to country ; its sacred Book has been burned to ashes ; its Churches have been razed to the ground. Heresies have sprung up within it ; sects have fought and quarrelled over their ideas of what it should be.

Time after time it might have been said, with much show of reason,

CHRISTIANITY IS A LOST CAUSE ; IT HAS
FAILED TO CONVERT THE WORLD,

it has not even proved itself popular or acceptable.

Yet no judgment upon the Church of Christ could be more superficial than this. It utterly ignores the fact that the real power of the Church is unseen ; *that no Cause has so often risen from the dead ;* that its sphere of action is spiritual, and that its conquests cannot possibly be estimated by a glance at the map.

Take the case of the individual.

Perhaps there is a man who has fallen into bad habits, and appears to be lost to all that is good, pure, and true.

The Devil has broken into the fair land of his soul, and has ravaged it. He claims the man's heart as his own. “ Look at the map,” he cries. “ The man is mine ! What virtue, what decency,

what precious jewel of goodness have I not stolen and plundered from him ? "

WELL MIGHT WE DESPAIR IF THAT WAS
ALL TO BE SAID IN THE MATTER !

But, thank God, when things are most desperate, there are invisible forces at work for the rescue of that man's soul.

Forces, did I say ? Nay, rather a Person ! One Who, though unseen, is ever near and can expel the foulest devils from the human heart when He is allowed to work.

The impure and odious fiends who have occupied the ground must needs guard well their possession when He appears upon the scene.

Early in the war the Germans swept irresistibly over Belgium and Northern France. To drive them out again is a much harder problem. It has called for united action, extreme self-sacrifice, and the utter loyalty of every man.

It has aroused the finest feelings, and developed the manliest qualities among those who have

SET THEIR MINDS UPON EXPELLING THE
INVADER.

One wounded Frenchman who had lost his right hand in battle said to his sympathetic friend—

" I ought to be thankful that only my hand is gone. I entered this struggle prepared to give my life for France, but she is content to take my hand only. She is abundantly welcome to it."

You cannot find this sort of thing on the map ; yet, in looking at the considerations which will ultimately decide the issue, we cannot afford to leave this man's spirit out of the question.

It is a force that prevails—and the world is beginning to realize that this war depends more upon spiritual and unseen forces than it had believed.

Sundar Singh is the son of a wealthy Sikh, but, since he became a Christian, he has renounced all, and wanders about as a Christian Fakir, teaching his fellow-men up and down the country.

He has just one long garment for his clothing, a blanket for his night's rest, and a Bible for his library.

Once some schoolgirls offered him shoes, but he declined, saying that even by his bleeding feet he drew men to Christ. In Nepal the villagers put him in the stocks, and covered his body with leeches. The first half hour was agony, but the joy of his Lord so overcame him that he sang praises, until the people said, “What is the good of torturing one to whom torment only brings joy ? ” and removed him from the stocks.

His chief persecutor came and humbly begged forgiveness, and afterwards became a Christian.

Another time he was followed by four robbers, but, turning suddenly round, he told them the story of the love of Christ until they were much affected. They took him home with them and heard that Christ would forgive sins.

“I can’t believe that He will forgive my sin,” said one; “come and see it!”

Wondering, Sundar Singh went with him through the forest, and was shown a ghastly pit full of dead bodies. “Can God forgive that?” asked the robber.

“Yes,” said Singh, “if you truly repent.”

To-day three of those men are Christians.

If you look at maps and diagrams showing the world and its heathen populations, you would probably be much discouraged.

THE DEVIL HAS MUCH GROUND AND IS STRONGLY ENTRENCHED.

No indication is given, however, of the existence of Sundar Singh and of men like him; but they do exist, and they “nibble” steadily at the Devil’s positions. Their work does not show in vivid red or flaring crimson upon a chart to denote territory won, but in actual life it is work that tells for good, though it is often forgotten and despised.

One of the French morning papers contained an additional leaf, written by a famous author, and entitled—

“PATIENCE, EFFORT, CONFIDANCE”

Its purpose was to show France that the enemy can only be driven out by these qualities in every Frenchman and every Frenchwoman.

It is the answer to the insolent taunt, “Look at the map.”

The enemy has the captured land ; France has the patience, the effort, the faith—and these invisible things will turn the tide against her foes.

There was a poor young fellow who was possessed by an evil spirit. The disciples of Christ tried to heal him, but failed.

They asked Him, “ Why could we not cast him out ? ” and the answer came—“ Because of your unbelief. This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting.”

Faith, Fasting, Prayer—these are the effectual, though invisible forces that deliver the possessed land of our souls.

Faith in Christ ; Fasting, which is self-control, long-suffering, patience—call it by which name you like ; and Prayer, which is Spiritual Effort—for

“ MORE THINGS ARE WROUGHT BY PRAYER THAN
THIS WORLD DREAMS OF,”

and the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working.

We are much inclined to think that the evil in the world is best encountered by the organized resistance of the Churches, and no doubt it is a good thing that religion should stand undivided and deal with the enemy on the principle of

THE SINGLE FRONT.

At the same time the real deciding factor is the individual Christian, who, by his Patience, Effort

and Faith makes it hard for the Devil to remain in his entrenchments.

There is no need to bewail the fact that the fight to recover lost ground is a long, hard task. It must needs be so, against an enemy so strongly in possession.

A supreme trust in our Leader, a persevering watchfulness and prayerfulness, and a capacity to

"ENDURE HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF
JESUS CHRIST"

will, in the end, win the day.

Whether you are a Christian, seeking to win fresh ground for Christ in the extension of His Kingdom, or whether you are a sinner, hitherto ignorant of the saving grace of Christ, and striving to be delivered from "the burden on your back," it is just the same.

Satan, the strong man armed, will only surrender his goods and possessions to the One that is stronger than he. You must seek Him.

A memorable statement was made by the English Prime Minister with regard to the ravaged territory of the invaded countries.

You remember its import. He pledged himself, in the name of the English people, not to sheath the sword until all the wrongs that had been imposed upon the Belgians were righted, all the land stolen from them restored, and Prussian militarism finally destroyed.

Then, and only then, could there be peace.

We feel that we can have no parley about peace with such a foe as Germany has revealed herself to be, until she comes to us as a suppliant, confessing her sins, and asking for forgiveness while showing willingness to repent.

Prussia's power to do harm must be greatly diminished ; she must give up her ill-gotten gains ; she must abandon them for ever.

And, to continue the parable, there can be no terms with sin, which has occupied a man's heart, except the absolute capitulation of the soul to Christ, its conqueror and Master, and the casting out of

THE SIN THAT HAS INVADED IT

with a resolute heart and a strong determination to have it no more.

“ Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with Thee my heart to share ?
Ah ! tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there !
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in Thee ! ”

So, then, there remain some questions which we might well put to our souls in all earnestness—

Have we resisted the Devil in his unscrupulous invasion of our soul ?

Have we said to him, like the little Belgian boy in the cartoon to the big German bully, “ No thoroughfare this way ” ?

Have we disputed with him possession of every stronghold, every fort, and every trench where, as though in a deep dug-out, he had settled himself without fear of expulsion?

Have we realized that there are mighty unseen forces ranged upon our side in the event of our warring against the Prince of Evil?

Have we "gone by the map," and constantly worried that God's Cause was losing, forgetting that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them"?

Have we learned yet that, though the enemy may take possession very easily of ground that is not his, the recovery of this ground is a very difficult matter, demanding incessant patience, effort and faith?

Do we know that, until the enemy has withdrawn from his place in our soul, there can be no real peace?

Have we learned, by joyous experience, to say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"?

CHAPTER XIV

CROSSING THE RIVER

WHEN the history of the present war comes to be written by one who is able to view it as a whole, and whose vision is not obscured by the incidents which now seem so important, but will afterwards take their proper place and be seen in right perspective, one or two things will stand out as the turning-points, the crises, and among these big events will figure prominently the battle of the Marne and the crossing of the river Aisne.

We have read detailed accounts of these movements. We have heard how the Connaught Rangers and Haking's Fifth Brigade crossed over the river in single file,

ON THE SLOPING GIRDER OF A RUINED BRIDGE UNDER SHELL FIRE !

We have been informed of the wonderful work the Royal Engineers, who built in a marvellously short time nine bridges, some of them broad and strong enough for the passage of heavy artillery—and all this in the face of a raking fire from the enemy's batteries.

We know, too, how one fortunate section of the army found a bridge absolutely entire, and of course pushed across as hard as it could go to occupy a favourable position.

As we read these things, and admire the courage of the men who did them, we may forget the details, amid the multitude of brave deeds of the war, but never shall we forget that

THE REAL TURNING POINT OF THE
CAMPAIGN WAS THE CROSSING OF THE
RIVER.

From that day we have never gone back!

There have been temporary reverses, and there have been advances, and consolidation of defences, but the river is crossed, and we may confidently expect that our armies will never return over its waters until the glad day when the war is ended and our men return home.

It is by no means the first time that the crossing of a river has marked a new enterprise, or a critical decision, or a change of fortune in the history of a nation or an individual.

Have you not read of a pile of stones, twelve in number, which was raised by the bank of the river Jordan, hundreds of years ago, to commemorate a wonderful crossing which marked the dawn of the new life of a nation?

Fathers used to bring their children to these stones, and, when their children asked the meaning

of the stones, they had no need of a "Parents' Book" to make their explanation!

"Ah, my children!" they would say, "a wonderful thing happened to our nation near to this spot. Our fathers had been dwelling in slavery in the far-off land of Egypt, and were grievously afflicted, until Jehovah, Whose we are and Whom we serve, brought us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

"For forty years the people wandered in the wilderness, and their children grew to manhood. Then, one day, these grown-up children saw in front of them this river, and from the other side beheld this beautiful land in which you dwell—and God sent them a message to say that they had come to the end of their wanderings. He told them that He would make for them a wonderful passage across the river, and that when they had reached the other side
THIS NEW LAND WAS TO BE THEIR HOME!

Since that day we have lived here and God has greatly blessed us.

"The stones which you see mark the spot where they first came out of the river, whose water God held up on either side so that their passage was over dry land.

"From that day we have dwelt safely in this land of milk and honey, and our new history began from the moment that these stones were piled to remind us of God's goodness."

I expect that Jewish fathers often told this story to their children, just as we have at times taken our children to the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square and told them of the sea-battle which won for England the mastery of the seas, or have perhaps read to them the story of the meadow of Runnymede where the Great Charter of English liberty was signed so many years ago!

A great Roman leader, Julius Cæsar, was led to take up arms against an old friend, Caius Pompeius, or Pompey, as he is generally known.

He led his legions to the bank of a river—quite a small stream, the Rubicon—and before crossing it, spent a night in meditation.

HE KNEW WHAT HIS ADVANCE ACROSS THE RIVER WOULD MEAN.

Civil war! Brother fighting against brother, Roman against Roman—the most distressing of all kinds of warfare.

At length, after long hours spent in thought, he made up his mind.

"The die is cast," he exclaimed, and plunged into the water, followed by his army. From that moment there was no turning back.

We have coined a phrase from that episode. "To cross the Rubicon," has come to mean, "to make a clear and irrevocable decision about anything."

The crossing of the Jordan was to the Israelites a red-letter day. It was the day upon which they

commenced to forget the things that were behind, in the experiences of the new life that lay ahead.

The cairn of stones might often remind them of the old days in the wilderness or speak to them of the escape from the bondage of Egypt, but it was intended rather to remind them of the goodness of God in giving them

THE NEW LAND OF CANAAN FOR A PERPETUAL POSSESSION

and thus fulfilling his promise made to their forefathers.

The cares and trials of the wilderness, the lash and the burdens of Egypt, were things of the past, never more to be renewed. If they were ever recalled to mind, it was only by way of contrast with the present happy lot.

One of Dr. Barnardo's old boys, now a member of the Canadian forces fighting in Flanders, called to see his old "home" at Stepney the other day.

"Ah!" said he, "I well remember the late Doctor and my life here! Where should I be to-day if it were not for these Homes?"

The day that he came into the Homes a poor neglected waif from a wretched city slum marked the passage of the river for him.

He thought of the past as he looked at the dormitory where he had slept, and left a gift for the boy who now occupies his old bed; but it was a past long forgotten. Gratitude to God and God's

servants was the predominant thought within his heart.

HE HAD CROSSED THE RIVER, and life had become new to him.

It would be interesting to collect the records of time and place where great men have made great decisions, which have not only moulded their own lives, but have influenced the lives of others, and even changed the course of history. What a book might be written of the critical moments in which the light came to such souls as General Booth, Martin Luther, Father Damien, William Carey, Henry Martin, Florence Nightingale, Joan of Arc, and many others !

When they suddenly saw clear ahead ; when they first gripped their life-work, as it were ; when they saw the river that lay ahead, swirling between them and the country to be taken, and courageously crossed it ; sometimes by a bridge constructed under overwhelming difficulties, sometimes by a courageous plunge into the icy waters of derisive opposition, sometimes by a broad and obvious passage, but, more often than not, by the single girder of a shattered ruin ! But, you say to yourself, these were big strong notable people ; they were not average common-placers like most of us. To tell me of these people is to discourage rather than to help ! What I want is a book full of the names and examples of ordinary folk ; a book which relates the causes which induced

ORDINARY PEOPLE TO MAKE NOBLE
DECISIONS

which made them choose the better part when they might have easily been contented with an easier life, which had no crosses, no uphill struggles, no long and fierce wrestlings with wrong.

Be of good cheer ! You need only use your eyes a little more, and you will be surprised at the number of quiet unnoticeable people who are doing this sort of thing, without advertisement, and without reward.

Have you never met them ? There are hundreds of them round about you. Men and women who have gone steadily ahead, with eyes fixed upon a shining ideal ; criticized and thwarted at every turn, yet living out what they saw, in their soul vision, to be right and true.

Men at the counter, who kept aloof from the wretched trickeries of the life in the shop ; business men whose word was ever their bond ; humble-minded but faithful workers in the slums, toiling to help others, with never a thought to help themselves ; old maiden ladies (what understanding heart does not throb in sympathy with these) who cheerfully gave up those precious hopes of wifehood and motherhood to tend a blind brother, or a suffering mother, setting their faces steadfastly towards their duty, while the world had nothing for them but sneering and ridicule !

Open your eyes and look around, I say. You may find heroes and heroines for the book you desire almost everywhere.

Would such a chronicle contain your name?

Could you take a friend to some hallowed spot (not a cairn of stones, but the corner of a pew in your Church, or the end of a bench in your Mission Hall) and tell him of a day in your life when

FOR THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW THE
PROMISED LAND

after years of struggling to obtain a glimpse of it?

You saw it across a stream of self-sacrifice, perhaps; across an ocean of broken friendships, and alienated sympathies; across a desert of misinterpreted motives; but you said to yourself—

“THAT’S MY LAND! I’M GOING THERE!”

And then you saw that all your bridges had been broken down, one by one.

YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS—that was a fine broad bridge. It had promised you a safe and easy passage; but, alas! the old enemy Satan had got at it first, mined it, blown it sky-high, not a plank was left!

YOUR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. That had gone too! There were timbers standing, but right in the very centre yawned a great gap, far too wide to be crossed. You couldn’t pass safely by that.

YOUR FRIENDS—YOUR HOME INFLUENCES—YOUR CHURCH WORK—all had been shattered: the enemy

had been very thorough ; but you saw that better land, and by hook or by crook you meant to get there, river or no river !

Then before you, as if by magic, the bridges upon which you had relied seemed to vanish from sight, and you beheld in place of them all just one solitary bridge, which the enemy had failed to destroy.

It was scarred and rent and twisted, but across it lay a firm and safe track,

A NARROW WAY, BUT A WAY OF SAFETY,
a way to take the whole world with the utmost certainty, but only in single file, one by one.

This single plank, as you looked at it, became more and more desirable ; so, falteringly, but sincerely you placed your feet upon it, and crossed that day.

It was Christ and His Salvation that you saw, and used.

You said (did you not ?) with utter humility—

“ No gift have I to bring,
O God of truth to Thee,
Save from a sullied heart,
To breathe Thy victory.”

It was only when you perceived that all the other bridges upon which you relied were shattered and useless, that you suddenly beheld that single girder and stepped out upon it.

I remember a man coming intoxicated to my door, and asking if “ the parson lived here.”

I went to the door and was astonished to receive a good sound rating on account of the barking of some dogs.

"I can't get a wink of sleep at night," he hic-coughed; "you ought to be sent to prison for having such animals," etc., etc.

The animals were not mine. I don't know whose they were, or whether they existed outside the man's imagination; but I couldn't convince the poor besotted fellow.

I found out his address, however, and called upon him the next day. He was very apologetic, and, after some conversation, I discovered he was an old soldier, who had served in India and Egypt and through the South Africa War.

"Did you ever take part in a retreat?" I asked him.

"Never!" he replied, almost indignantly.

"Not even for military reasons?" I suggested.

"Um—well, I've been in a retirement, but we soon got back again and drove 'em out," he answered.

"Well, old fellow," I said, "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but it strikes me you are retreating now pretty rapidly. At any rate, you are not facing the foe like the old soldier that you are! Here is the Devil coming on at you as hard as ever he can, and all you do is to 'go under' every time he attacks, and to keep on quitting position after position and leaving things in his hands,

instead of making a fight for it and daring him to do his worst."

He saw my meaning, and said, "I'm afraid you're right, sir."

I followed up the shaft, inwardly praying for guidance.

"Come now, which is it to be? Retreat, defeat, entire surrender to the enemy, bag and baggage, or

RIGHT-ABOUT-FACE, FIX BAYONETS,
CHARGE!"

"It's not so easy as talking about it, sir."

"I know that," I answered. "But you're a soldier, a British soldier, who never yet turned his back on the enemy, I'll be bound! Now what is it to be?"

"Right-about-face, of course, sir, but I can't trust myself."

"No, I don't suppose you can. You can trust your Captain, though. Step out, and follow Him, and let the Devil do his worst."

Do you know, dear reader, that among some happy spiritual experiences, this one ranks pre-eminent! Then and there the man "crossed the river." He returned to the fight, after his disgraceful "retirement." He got in another blow at the adversary. In face of the heavy fire of old habits, old companionships, old temptations, he crossed the river, and, thank God, has remained on the right side of it ever since.

But then, you see his bridge was down. He realized that. He had given up hope. There just remained the single girder, salvation through faith in Christ, along which

HE HUMBLY CREPT UNTIL HE FOUND
HIMSELF ON THE THRESHOLD OF A
NEW LIFE.

The fight wasn't over, by any means. It will be many a day before the bugles call the final charge to victory ; but the man has crossed the river ; he has learned to fight and not to surrender ; he has learned to trust his Captain, and to find safety and peace and victory in Him.

DEAR READER, HAVE YOU ?

CHAPTER XV

DOING THEIR BIT

IF the Churches of Christ were "doing their bit" with the same concentration and whole-heartedness as the country is showing in this European War,

THE HOSTS OF EVIL WOULD BE HOLDING
THEIR LINES WITH DIFFICULTY.

Everywhere along the different Fronts we see, at the time of writing, the spectacle of the forces of the enemy being gradually pushed back before the attacks of the Allied armies.

At first it was not so ; the enemy came on "like a flood" ; they were superior in preparation, in numbers, in equipment, overwhelmingly so.

Then came the rally of the Allies, dating from the battle of the Marne, and though the onslaughts of the foe increased in vigour and intensity, they were no longer successful.

Verdun, Ypres, Trent, are now names familiar to all.

In these places the enemy strove to the verge of madness to break through and yet failed.

A reaction has set in. Humanly speaking, day

by day sees the success of the Allies more assured. It may even be that before these lines are perused by the reader, the victory will rest with them, and peace will have crowned their efforts.

“ Patience, effort, confidence ”—the French talismans in the present war—are proving victorious.

But what is the great secret of this steadily increasing power to turn the tide of affairs ?

In a word or two it is this—

EVERY ONE IS DOING HIS BIT !

We are thoroughly convinced that “ a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together,” is the only way to win this war.

We have the same phenomenon in the spiritual world ; “ a mighty host advancing, Satan leading on,” as the hymn puts it ; the Cause of righteousness hard put to it to make any real resistance ; and alas ! more often than not, giving way before the foe.

Though we most firmly believe that

GOD'S CAUSE AND GOD'S PEOPLE MUST
TRIUMPH IN THE END,

it would be sheer folly to pretend that Christianity rules and reigns in the world to anything like the extent of victory.

Let this war, once again, teach us a lesson as regards our failings in the warfare which every man is called upon to wage, and from which

THERE ARE NO AUTHORIZED EXEMPTIONS.

The spiritual war calls for “ more men and yet more men ” for the fighting line, and enlistment in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ is the first and necessary step to take.

Unfortunately, even if we suppose that every Church member is really a soldier of the Cross, and ranks as a fighting unit, it is quite impossible to allow either that the Church of Christ is winning the victories over sin which it ought to win, or that all its individual members are doing their bit whole-heartedly and efficiently.

But we may confidently assert that very large numbers from all the organized religious bodies are

REALLY ANXIOUS TO BE MORE EFFICIENT,
AND TO COUNT FOR SOMETHING

in the war between good and evil.

How can we advise or help such people ?

There has been a National Mission. The purpose of this Mission is to arouse the followers of Christ to a greater sense of their responsibility, and thus to invite them to a greater efficiency, rather than to make an appeal to non-Christians although the former should, if realized to any degree, bring about the latter.

I have just been reading Boyd Cable's book, bearing the title which suggested this paper—*Doing Their Bit*.

Until I read it, there was no conception in my mind of the extraordinary way in which the men

and women, the agencies, institutions and factories of our nation have tackled the ever-present problem of winning the war.

The pages of this interesting book abound, not only in those solid facts which should make every low-spirited pessimist take fresh courage, and begin to hope, but they teem with suggestions which may well be applied to the other and the greater warfare, fought with spiritual weapons and against spiritual foes.

Here are words from the chapter called "The Munition Machine." They are addressed to the soldiers at the Front, to reassure them that they need have no further anxieties as to a possible shortage of shells or cartridges or guns in the future.

"It may surprise you at the Front, as it certainly did me, to learn that the Ministry of Munitions has taken a grip on the whole industry of this country; that no man can buy a barrow-load of old iron without some official of the Ministry getting to hear of it and popping up to air an insatiable curiosity; that you cannot buy or sell a new or second-hand machine without a permit from the Ministry; that no man or firm may use man or machine to make clocks or gramophones or motor-cars if the Ministry prefers the man or firm to turn his factory to making munitions.

"As a result, thousands of machines and scores of thousands of men have been turned from other work on to munitions.

“ If a man is running a machine for stamping out trouser-buttons, and the Ministry wants him to turn over to stamping out cartridge-discs, he has to do so. All this simply means that the engineering resources of the country are mobilized, efficiently organized, and turned full force on to munition-making.

“ The munition machine is running now with wonderful smoothness, but it is easy to see

WHAT A GIGANTIC TASK IT HAS BEEN
TO GET IT IN RUNNING ORDER !

“ It could only have been done with the willing agreement and co-operation of the great engineering and business men and firms throughout the country.”

But, you see, the nation is at war ! Nothing else in the world would have led men to make the sweeping alterations that have turned their business premises into munition factories.

Is it not time that the Church of Christ began to awake from its long spell of sleepiness and complacency, and to recognize that

IT IS AT WAR !

If each Church and all Church members put themselves unreservedly into the hands of their Leader, where would all the divisions and differences, the inefficiency and the weakness find themselves ?

Then, as in the National War campaign,
THE USELESS THINGS WOULD BE SCRAPPED,

and the useful things would be adapted to the new purpose of winning the war ; not a thing would be allowed by Church or individual which would be likely to delay or hinder final victory.

We should then appreciate the spirit of St. Paul, who wrote, " This one thing I do ; forgetting the things behind, I press forward to the mark " ; and so should we !

But what a task to get such a scheme into working order !

Will the recent National Mission do it ?

Will it lead all, or even many, to say, metaphorically, " Whereas I was making chocolate-boxes, now I am making cartridge-cases " ?

To many a minister of the Gospel it will sound forth a clarion call to turn his Church from a fashionable and comfortable spiritual " club " into a great busy spiritual workshop, in which the powers of his people are utilized and concentrated upon the successful conduct of the campaign against evil, and from which all that is useless or not adaptable, however prominently it may have figured before, is permanently scrapped.

To the ordinary member of the congregation who has hitherto employed his undoubted talents in the amusement of his fellow-men, it will suggest, please God, that these same gifts may be well turned on to the work of strenuously opposing in the name of Christ some obtrusive evil ; such as, for instance, the curse of excessive drinking.

Imagine the new power which would affect the ministry of those valiant souls who are engaged in fighting sin in its utmost loathsome aspect, occupying the trenches at the Front, as it were, in the slums and amidst the haunts of vice!

If we could, like the writer of the book, send a message to them such as this—

“Fight on; we are at your back! Do not worry over shortage of money. We have consecrated our purses to the successful prosecution of the war, and we will see you through!

“We are one and all praying continually and earnestly. God forbid that we should sin against you by ceasing to pray for you. Your Cause is God’s; God’s Cause is ours. FIGHT ON!”

O Church of Christ, O worker in that Church,

WHY NOT?

Here is a message from the chapter, “Shells and more shells,” written to the author to show that his appeal to the workers was not in vain.

“DEAR SIR,—

“We the managers, foremen, and charge-hands, who listened with grave interest and concern to your description of our brave lads fighting in France and Flanders, and the hardships they have to endure, pledge ourselves, and desire you to inform our lads at the Front, that so far as we are concerned at this National Munitions Factory, we are working diligently, harmoniously, and sticking it,

and will continue to stick it, with the one object of getting out of the above factory

EVERY POSSIBLE SHELL!"

What a heartening message the Church could send to her frontiersmen, her missionaries, her slum-workers, her drink-fighters, if all her communicants, officials, guilds and baptized members joined together in the firm resolve to see this thing through, and to "send out every possible shell"!

But this she will never do until she recognizes that she is at war, against a powerful foe, and that all her plans and energies must be busily turned to bringing the conflict to a successful issue.

One of the chief difficulties in the way of the Church is the old problem of the employment of the unskilled.

This problem has been occupying attention for years, and is a never-ending source of anxiety to the overworked clergy in populous parishes.

To take a specific case—the Sunday School.

This magnificent institution, which should be one of the greatest factors in the religious life of the nation, has repeatedly suffered both from understaffing and from its necessary staffing with teachers who cannot teach, and have the most elementary notions of gaining the interest and attention of their scholars.

The present war, however, has taught us not to

under-estimate the possibilities of the unskilled or the amateurs.

“ The men who now grab and sling about the white-hot billets, handling them and the huge power machines so smoothly and skilfully, were all unskilled no more than a matter of months ago.

“ Milkmen and market-gardeners and carters and all sorts they were, red-raw new to the job, never inside a shop or handled a tool until they came into this war work.

“ This work is not only making shell-factories out of sewing-machine and tobacco works, munition-contractors out of enamel-button makers, munition-machines from bicycle-factory-lathes, but it is also manufacturing, as a by-product, engineers and mechanics from milkmen, and all sorts of unlikely material.”

Let the Churches take the hint, and let its members shrink less from tasks which they are asked to do. If a milkman can make munitions, why should not a salesman learn to teach in a Sunday School? Why should any man withdraw from Christian work because of shyness or inexperience, or fear as to results?

This war, like the European war, is a war for amateurs. Amateur soldiers, amateur workers, unfit, unskilled, poor in quality and power, yet

WHEN WE ARE WEAK THEN ARE WE
STRONG ;

and all that is needed is for each member of the Church to realize two things—

1. That God wants him ;
2. That God can use him, wise or ignorant, skilled or unskilled, if he will but say—

"O Lord, use me, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where !"

The way in which the women of the land have shouldered unaccustomed burdens is a great witness to the willingness of the nation to do its bit.

From the book we read of several cases.

Here is a girl who had before her a distinguished college career ; she has abandoned it for a course of instruction in munition work, and has been given a berth in a large works in a munition city.

Here is a titled lady working in a factory, her title and position unknown to her fellow-workers. Not only has she proved her value in actual work, but, by constant talks with her workmates, has stimulated them to a greater enthusiasm of labour, and a consequent large increase of output.

Another lady of gentle birth early on helped to distribute recruiting papers, worked in a soldiers' free buffet, made Red Cross supplies, and is now engaged in munition work some eighty hours per week.

We know how, in almost every sphere of labour, the sight of women, sometimes in unaccustomed dress, has grown too familiar to be commented on.

Women clean the windows of my house, instead

of men ; punch the tickets when I ride in the tram ; wheel the luggage along the station platforms ; deliver and collect the letters,—and all this is a daily, hourly reminder that

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY,
and that to abstain from some form of spiritual work because we have not been brought up to it is but

THE VERY FEEBLEST KIND OF EXCUSE,
and no reason at all !

No ! the only person God cannot use in His great war is the person who is indifferent, who does not care, who is too fond of his own personal ease to be willing to turn out at some sacrifice from his accustomed groove to perform some small service for God's Cause.

With such people, unless God in his mercy sends a severe shock as an eye-opener, even He can do little or nothing.

They are the shirkers, the slackers, the self-sparers. To them it is little or nothing that God's Church is at war.

“ If other people are such fools as to steal or get drunk or behave in criminal ways, that is their own fault. Let them bear the penalty of their own folly,” say they.

But we are the rather concerned with those who are doing nothing for God,

YET LONGING TO DO SOMETHING.

They are quite willing to be used, but feel their lack of skill.

In the light of these war experiences, let us make two simple suggestions to all Church members of all denominations—

1. Do not be satisfied until you have a deep and profound conviction that God is at war with the Devil, and that He wants your help.

You are stirred to pity when you think of Belgium, its weeping widows, its dishonoured womanhood, its shattered homes. These feelings of pity have led you, though the ruins are far away, to work and give, though your working and gifts do not seem to amount to much; and you have said within yourself—

"I will do all I can to help—collect money, organize working-parties, make shells, fight in the trenches, anything and everything however little or great I will gladly do."

Yet God's war is closer at hand. You cannot turn round without seeing it. You can even find it going on in your own soul, and wherever you go you see signs of the work of the devil; men who have lost their respectability, women who have fallen low, drunkards, swearers, covetous money-makers, and unbelievers. Will you not say to God, as you think of the National Mission—

"O God, help me to get a vision of the need of the world, and then send me into the fight, if it is

only to comfort some of the fighters. Find me a little place to fill and I will fill it.”

2. Do not withhold from your God and from His Cause anything,

WHATEVER be the cost of surrender.

It is easy enough to sing—

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Shall have my life, my soul, my all.”

We can afford to be generous with the whole realm of nature, especially as it is never likely to be ours, but we often make a great trouble of dedicating ourselves and our small possessions and freely offering them to our Master, their rightful owner.

At a Church Missionary Society meeting once the offertory contained, among the coins, a slip of paper, torn out from a note-book, and on it were these words—

“ MYSELF, LORD SEND ME ! ”

How different were the feelings of the young man to whom the Saviour said, “ Sell all that thou hast, and come, follow Me ” !

When he heard these words he went sorrowfully away, for he had great possessions.

Recently, in a newspaper, an account of the

Shackleton Expedition appeared, with the following headlines—

FAILURE TO REACH MAROONED MEN.
IMPENETRABLE ICE PACK.

Now the office of the National Mission is to act as an icebreaker if it is to do any real good, for the great obstacle to Christian service is the icy coldness of our hearts towards Christ.

No one can wonder that the Church makes so little headway, that it fails to reach the marooned or shipwrecked souls. There is a hardness of heart, a dearth of keen and loving enthusiasm for Him, and for the souls on whose behalf He died.

Let there be a warmth, a thaw, an intensity of love, an absence of calculation about our worship, and we shall soon see the difference.

We like Christ, but do we love Him—LOVE Him?

We believe in His Cause, but do we live in it, work in it, occupy ourselves in it night and day as though it were to us the one real and vital interest in life?

Would we break the precious alabaster box of any and every treasured and hoarded possession, if need be, to show our adoration to Him as readily as we have given our best and dearest, toiled our hardest, dedicated our finest to the cause of our earthly King and Country?

As Christians, we are at war, under the banner of the Cross; as soldiers we must abandon the

pleasant conditions of security, comfort, and prestige through religion, for a readiness to endure hardness, to train on for a place in the firing line, and thus to do our bit for Christ.

Let us not neglect that little bit of service in our home. The Devil is busy there with our young brother, or our dear daughter ; with those who bake for us, who wait upon us and run at our bidding. He is busy with the business men we meet, with the ladies who call at our house, with our fellow-communicants, with the children, with the aged, with the sufferers. Oh, the pity of it ! Shall any of these souls be marooned and lost because conventionality, or training, or fear has erected a barrier of impenetrable ice around my heart ? because Jesus the Sun of Righteousness has not yet filled my sky with His bright beams, and melted that barrier, and warmed me with His love ?

CHAPTER XVI

BACK HOME

CHRISTMAS time has brought thoughts of Peace; and Peace makes us think of the days to come when this war, terrible yet necessary from our point of view, shall be over, and

OUR BOYS SHALL COME BACK HOME.

What joy there will be! Not "mafficking," this time. We have suffered too much for that. Not insane shouting over painting the map with another little patch of red—but joy, real joy, over our gallant fellows, that they have returned again from the stern fields of desperate fighting, and because they will have deserved every little bit of the praise which they will then receive. The mere thought of it makes some of the

"STAY-AT-HOME-AGAINST-THEIR-WILL" MEN long to be off, and take their places in the midst of the fray, though doubtless they are doing their country more service in the very place where they are most needed. Still, the stay-at-homes on munition work or Government work of a necessary kind, the elders, the invalids, and the weaklings, will not play the part of the ungracious elder son who was in the field, and grudge a welcome to the other sons and brothers (not prodigals, but patriots) when

they come back home ; but will join in, and take a hand in any right way of feasting them and rejoicing over them.

And all this reminds us that just now our men in the trenches must be thinking very hard of home, and Christmas, and mother and father, and the little curly-headed sonny—joys which await them

WHEN THEY COME BACK

and the war is over.

I was reading in a favourite Book of mine the other day of “ Joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.”

Here’s a joy that we can take a hand in at once, as regards ourselves ; for if we realize our sinfulness, and, on bended knee like Hezekiah

SPREAD IT OUT BEFORE THE LORD,

we shall find that the confession of it and repentance for it bring us the very purest joy that is to be found.

I feel sure that the publican who humbled himself before God (in the parable), not only went home justified, but went home rejoicing because, at last, he had taken his sinful soul to the Great Physician, found that his disease was not fatal, his case was not hopeless, but that

ETERNAL LIFE LAY BEFORE HIM.

So, in this great Book of Hope, I find more and more that the great thought in it is

GETTING BACK HOME—

Home to God, to the Father.

We have two words in common use in our churches, words that are much misunderstood—Conversion and Repentance. They both mean "Come Back."

They mean "Come back from wrong paths, from false joys, from profitless bargains, from vain quests." They mean "Come back to truth, purity, love—back to Christ, back to the Father."

Some men are like Sir Walter Raleigh of old, who was released from prison in order to search for a city which was reported to be paved with gold—the fabulous city of Manoa.

Their search, like his, is in vain; no such city existed, and he was forced to return with empty hands.

Men who shut out religion from their lives, and seek for golden cities—for wealth, position, or the satisfaction of earthly joys—seek them in vain, and must come back eventually to God for peace, joy, and the fulfilment of their hearts' desires.

Other men are like Columbus, who staked all his honour and reputation upon the existence of another country. All opposed him, but

LOOKING BEYOND, HE SAW THE INVISIBLE
AND WOULD NOT BE TURNED FROM IT.

When God calls "Come Back," He calls not to a Raleigh-search, but to a Columbus-voyage, with a certainty, not a fable, at the end of it.

The Father of the prodigal, by his longing and his prayers, was calling out to his son daily "Come back."

The memories of his early days whispered in the prodigal's ears "Go back!" The thought of the rags on his back, the swine and the husks at his feet, the gnawing hunger within his frame, urged insistently "Back! Back! to your' blessings, to your sonship, to your Father's love, to Home, and Happiness!" If he delayed, it was because he feared that these things were lost for ever.

I have heard of a young fellow who waded, step by step, into the mire of sin. Like the prodigal son he came in due course to poverty and rags. One thing he kept from the pawnshop until the very last—his watch. It was his mother's gift to him. The day came when he dragged his remorseful steps to the hated door, to get what price he could to save himself from starvation. As he stood on the threshold he took it out for a last look; the hands pointed to the twelve. His eyes grew dim with tears. He heard his mother's pleading voice, as in the past years—"My son, every day at twelve o'clock I shall be praying for your return. When you are tired of sin, Come back." Then and there he resolved to return to his mother and to his God.

The Blood of Christ, issuing drop by drop from those sacred wounds, calls aloud to each wayward, obstinate, proud soul—

"RETURN YE UNTO GOD! COME BACK!"

There is a public-house near Stafford, over whose door is a little board which bears two words—

"WHY NOT?"

I wonder how many men have been drawn into the inn for a drink by those words! They should be over the door of every church and mission hall, written in clear letters on the banner of every open-air meeting where men are urged to enlist for Christ—

WHY NOT?

Another clear call in the Bible is God's call to the departing soul. It is the same call—"Come Back."

The spirit is bidden to

RETURN UNTO GOD WHO GAVE IT.

It came from God; it was meant for God to use; it was destined to eternal enjoyment of God's presence; and when life on earth is over, God calls it back to Himself.

"All the aim of life is just
Getting back to God;
Every grief we have to bear,
Disappointment, cross, despair,
Each is but another stair—
Getting back to God.

Thus from sinful ways called back,
Feet with blessings shod,
Joys shall cluster round the track
Where your steps have trod.
And when days on earth are few,
Heaven will dawn upon your view,
Death will only mean to you
Going home to God."

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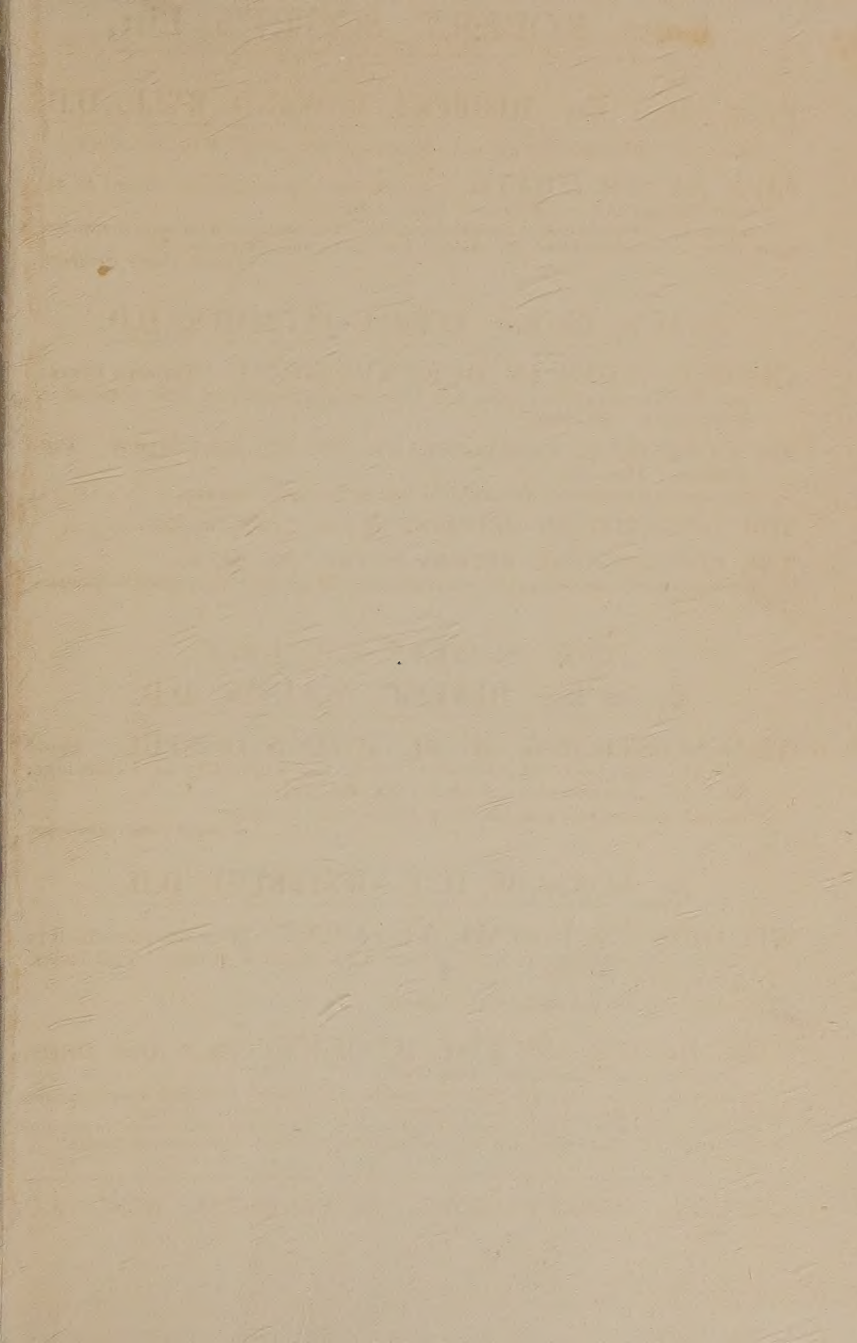
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